FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX

HOW TO
PAINT LIKE FRAZETTA
Compose a classic fantasy painting in Photoshop!

How to create textured digital art on page 68

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Inside
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MIX TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL ART
PAINTER 12'S NEW TOOLS EXPLAINED

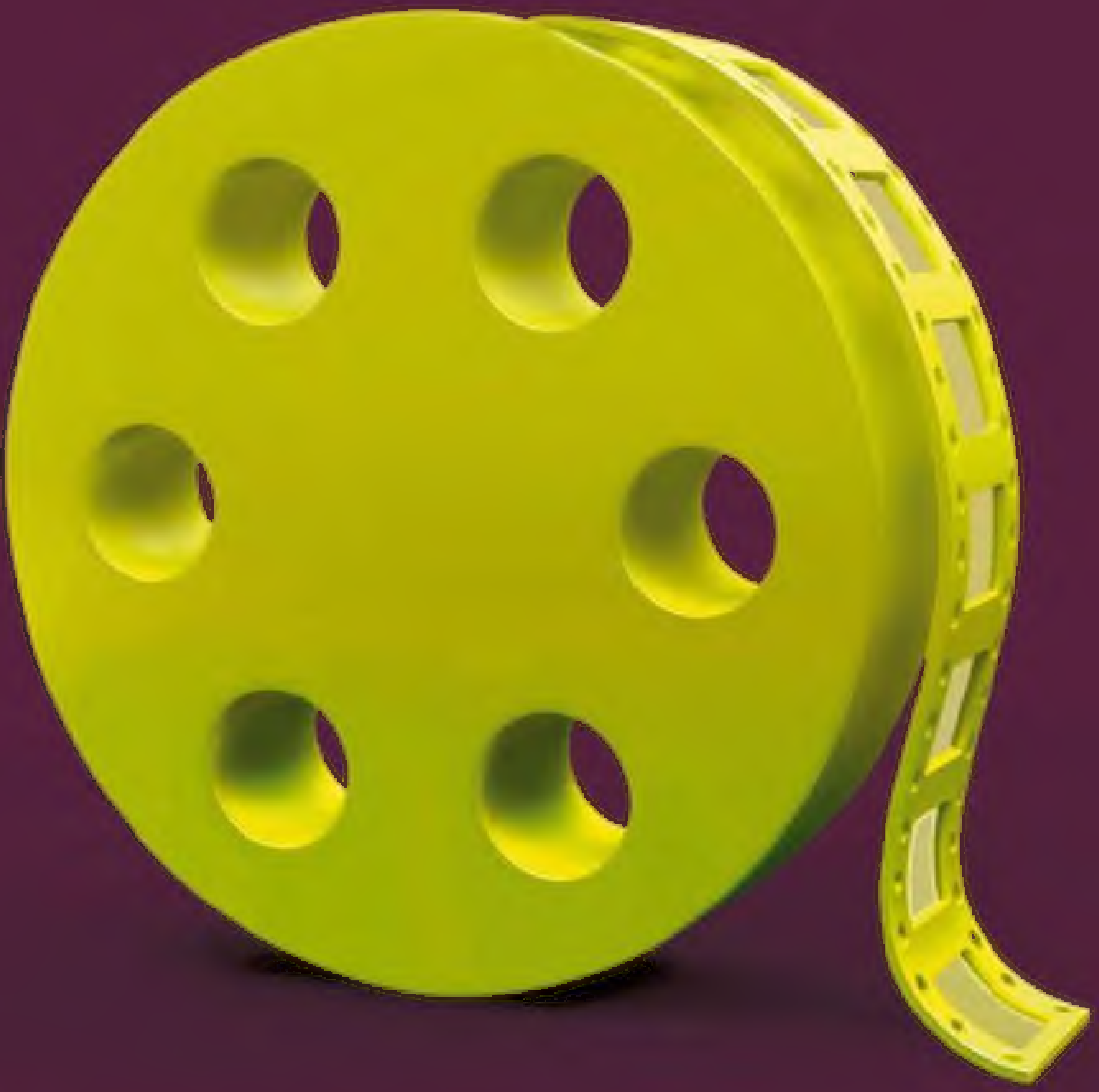
MAKE A SPLASH!
FANTASY ART
Dive into digital art! Learn how to create beautiful characters with cover artist **Mélanie Delon**

The secrets to painting better light on page 70

Issue 73 | Sept 2011 | Printed in the UK £5.99
Future MEDIA WITH PASSION

ARTIST Q&A STARTER GUIDE TO PAINTING WARRIORS, DRAGONS AND MORE!

180 million Arab animation fans under 25 years of age*.



yet the Arabic animation industry is still in its infancy.

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Source: Global Animation Industry: Strategies, Trends and Opportunities –2009, Animation Age Ghetto –www.tvtropes.com.

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Welcome...
to a sea of fantasy

Considering the themes we've covered in ImagineFX, it seems odd that in almost five years we've never featured a mermaid on our cover. One of fantasy's most-loved creatures has eluded us. So this month, in celebration of classic fantasy, I dived in and asked the fantastic Mélanie Delon to paint a modern, beautiful take on the classic fantasy icon. Mélanie's deft touch, her use of colour and skill in capturing a moment, a gaze, made her the ideal artist to bring our mermaid to life. You can find out how she does it on page 70.

The classic fantasy theme is picked up in the Q&A section, which is swamped by a crack team of artists delivering tips on everything from creating ornamental shields, to painting athletic female barbarians and unravelling the secrets of defining a curly dragon's neck.

Elsewhere, our workshop artists have tackled the theme, with Daren Bader showing how to paint like Frazetta in Photoshop. Discover how he 'beats up' his digital art on page 88. Then, on page 82, Jorge Jacinto reveals how to compose a larger-than-life forest scene before Lauren K Cannon brings us back to the subject of detail. On page 76 she reveals how to render perfect skin tones in a superb fantasy portrait workshop.

As usual there are plenty of art, workshops and interviews to enjoy this month, including the great Roger Dean on page 48, so if I were you I'd get reading! As always, let me know what you think of the issue...

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

Our special cover for subscribers this issue.

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ImagineFX

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NEXT ISSUE ON SALE **23 AUGUST 2011**
Printed in the UK by Midway (cover)
William Gibbons (inside)
Distributed by Seymour Distribution Ltd
+44 (0) 207 429 4000
2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1 9PT

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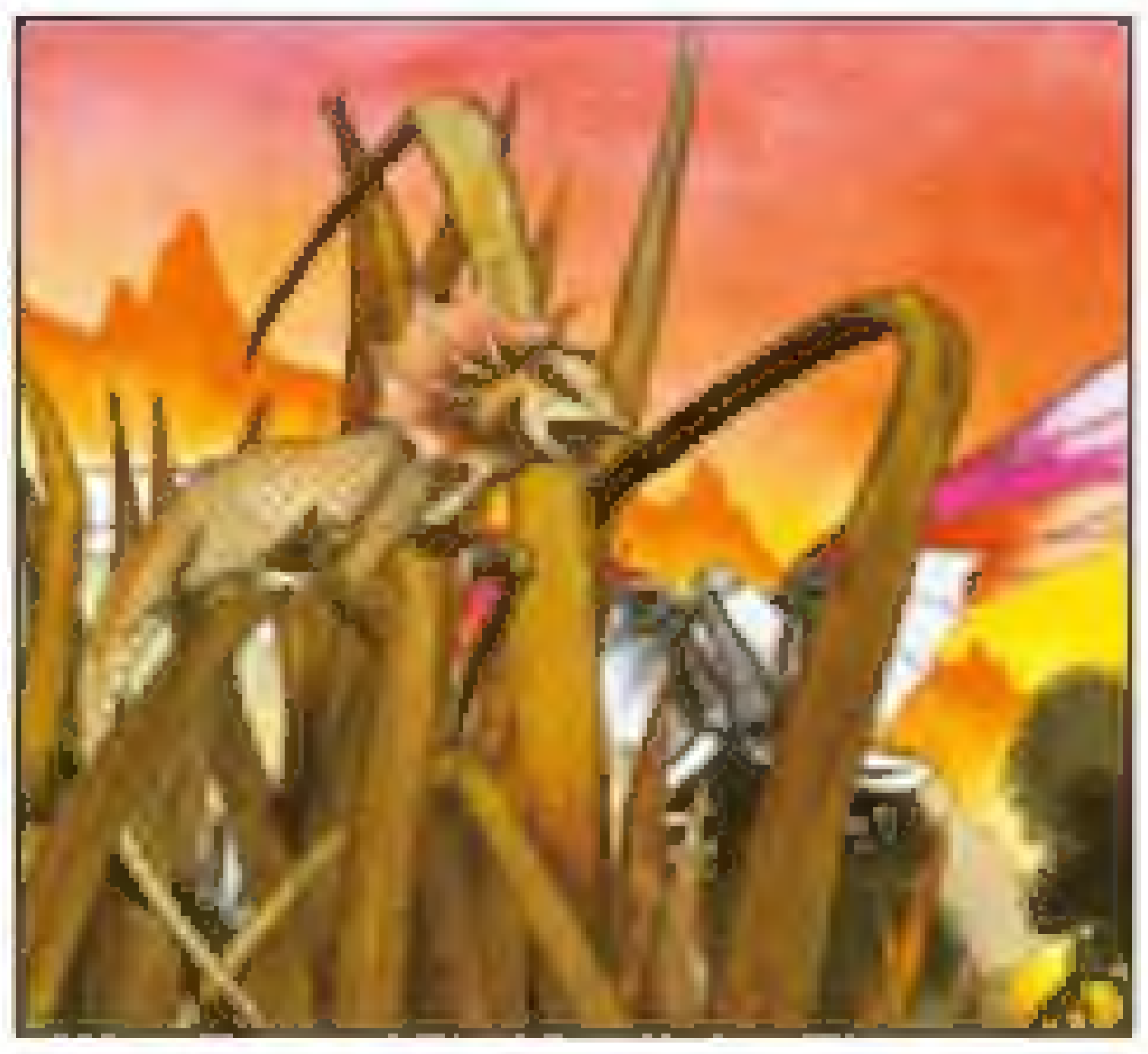
Featured artists

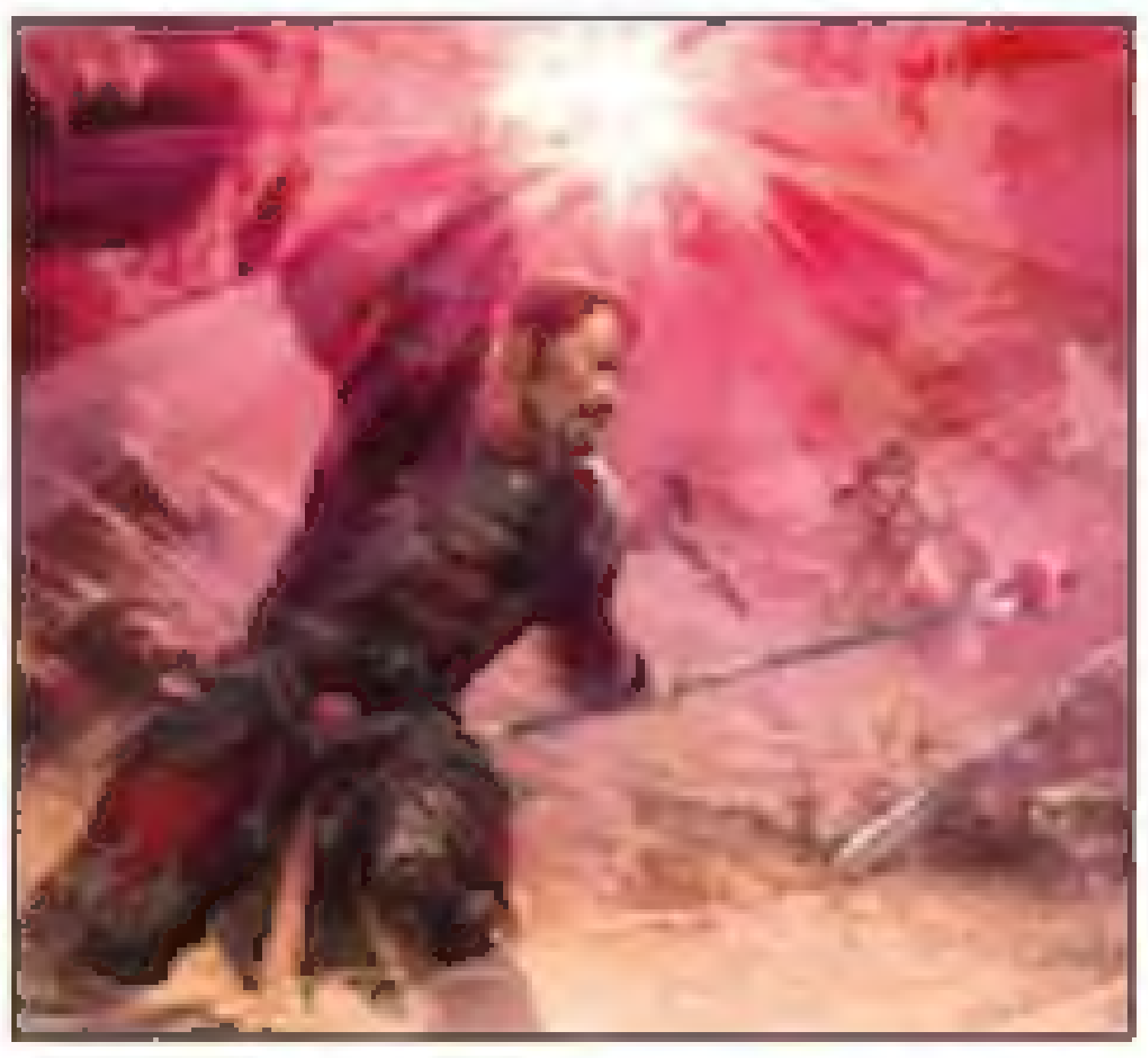
ImagineFX brings together some of the world's finest artists to share their techniques and inspiration for creating stunning artwork



Roger Dean

Roger is an illustrator, designer and author who's been at the cutting edge of imaginative art for over three decades. The UK artist has sold over 60 million images worldwide on posters and music album covers, as well as writing two best-selling art books and designing some unique furniture. Be inspired and read our interview with the artist on page 48.

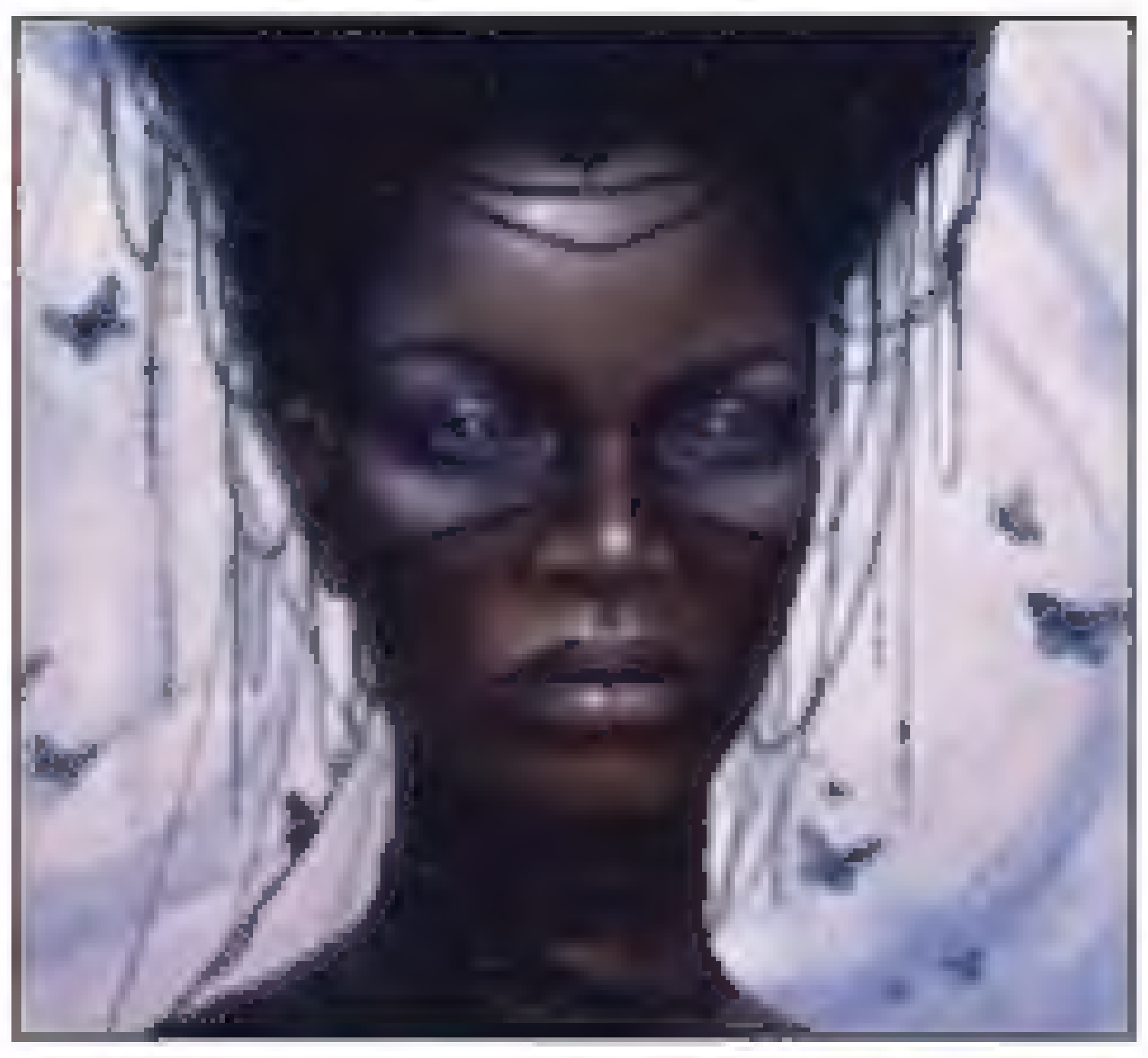
rogerdean.com



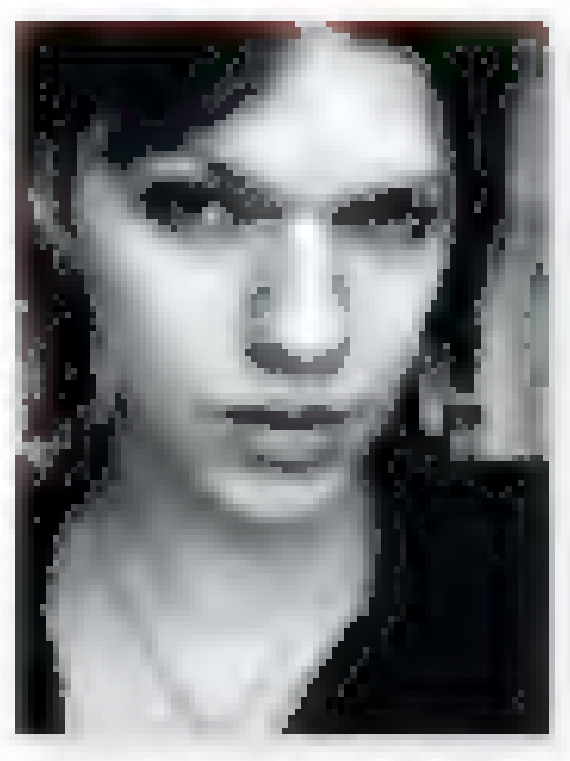
Svetlin Velinov

Having first learned traditional art and then animation, Svetlin was introduced to digital art and never looked back. As a leading fantasy and game concept artist and illustrator Svetlin combines his knowledge to create unique fantasy images. On page 74 he explains the particular obstacles that come with composing an image for a website.

velinov.cghub.com

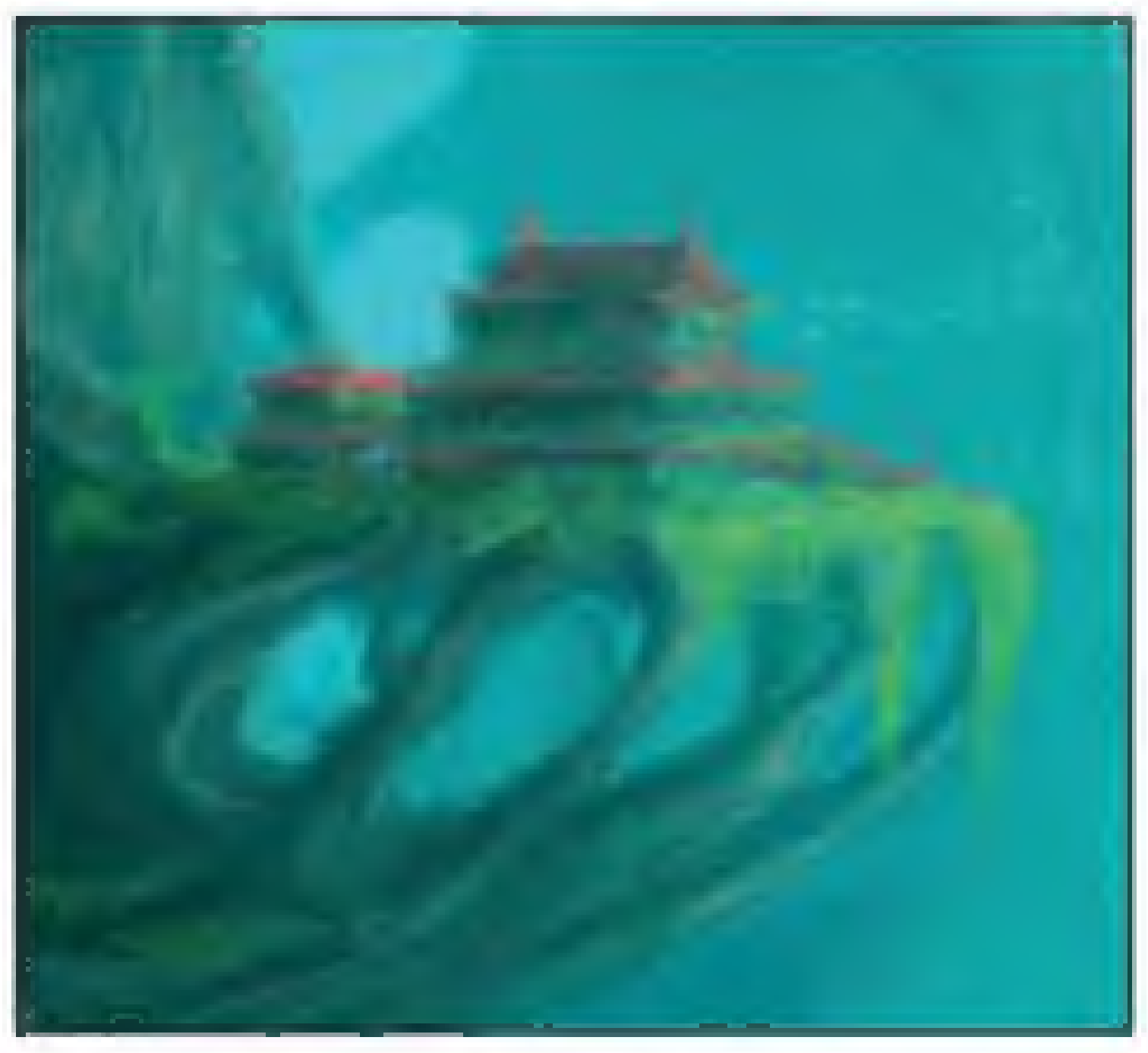


Lauren K Cannon



A self-confessed lover of the macabre and the strange, Lauren manages to eke out beauty in the unlikeliest of places. As well as creating key art for White Wolf and Fantasy Flight Games, Lauren is a regular contributor to ImagineFX, and on page 76, she reveals her techniques for rendering skin tones, as well as sharing her ideas for how to add strong details to a portrait.

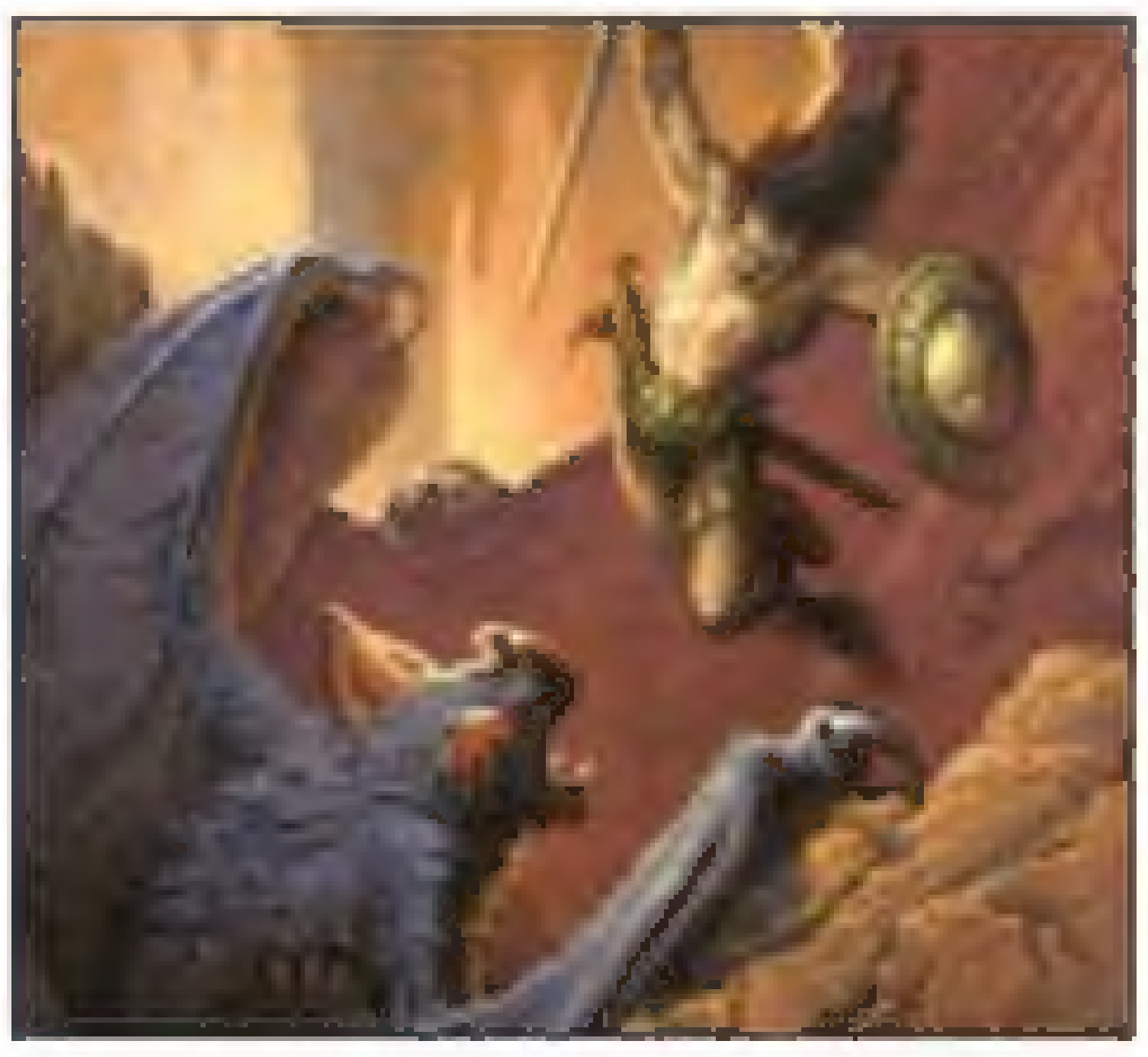
navate.com



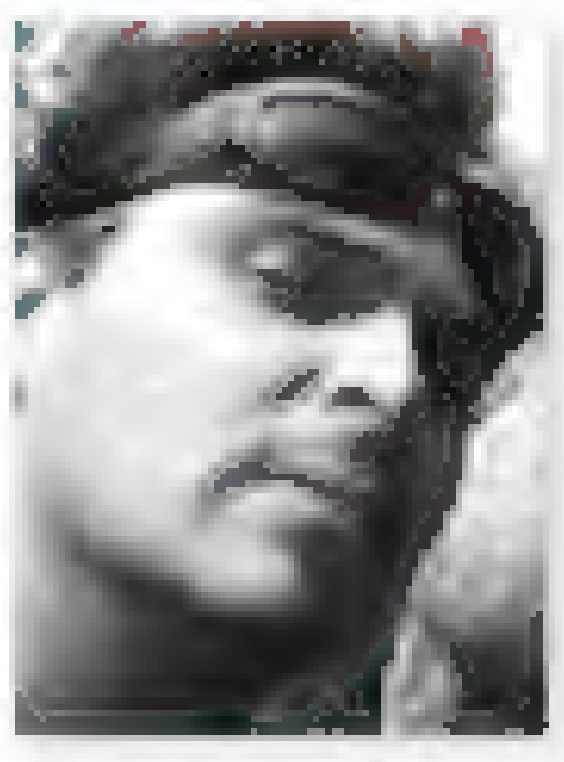
Jorge Jacinto

Jorge is a freelance artist and illustrator who first picked up a stylus at the age of 16 and managed to land his first job as a concept artist when he was 19. Jorge is best known for his paintings of vast, sweeping landscapes and dense forests. In this issue he offers an insight into how he achieves his sense of scale and foreboding in his broad painterly environments. Read his workshop on page 82.

blinck.deviantart.com

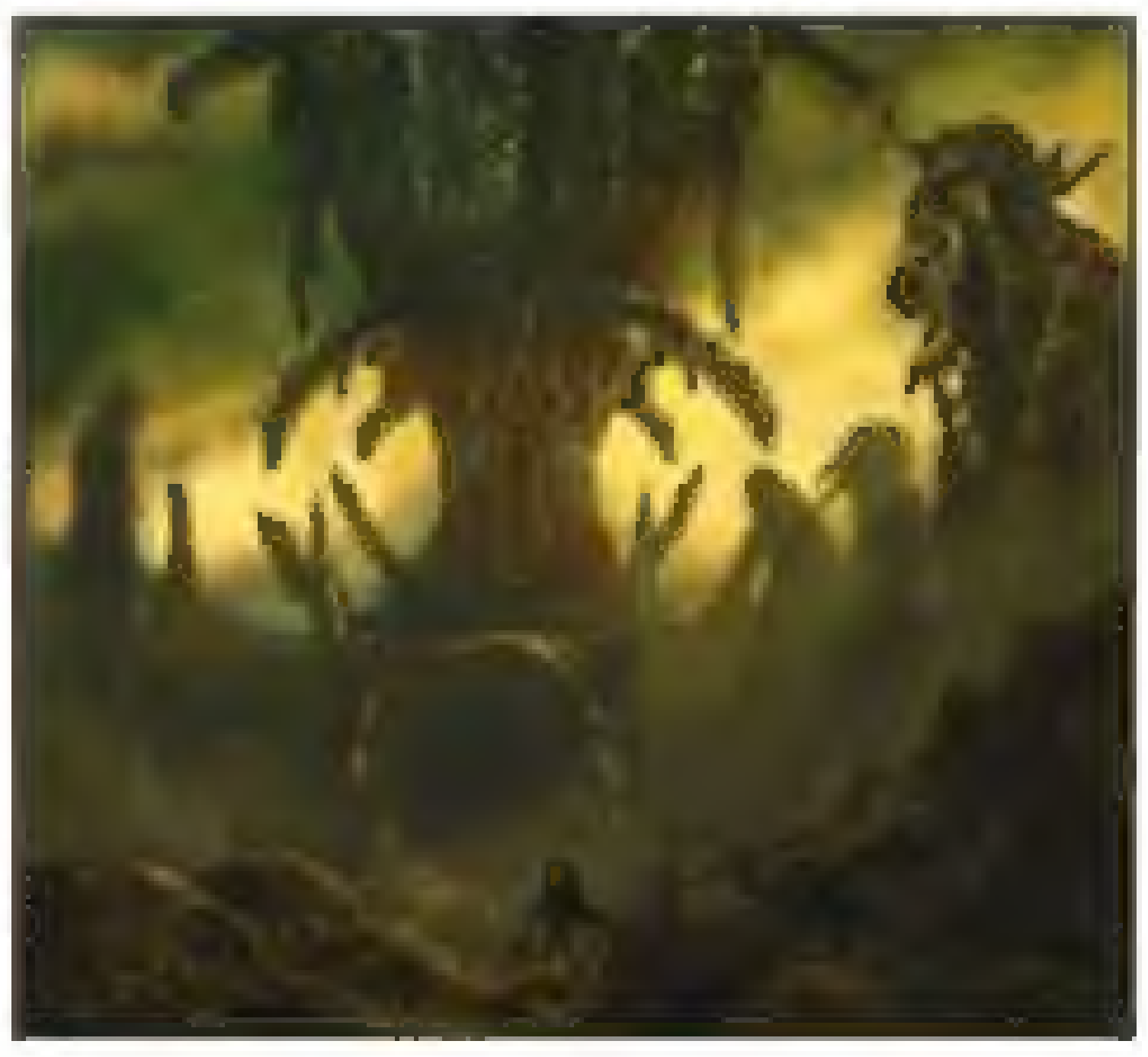


Daren Bader



Even as a senior art director at one of the world's premier video game studios, Daren manages to find time exploring his love of fantasy art. He's a regular at San Diego Comic Con alongside Dave Palumbo and Scott Altmann, and last year won acclaim for his Frazetta tribute painting. Who better to demonstrate how to recreate Frazetta's style digitally? You can see the results on page 88.

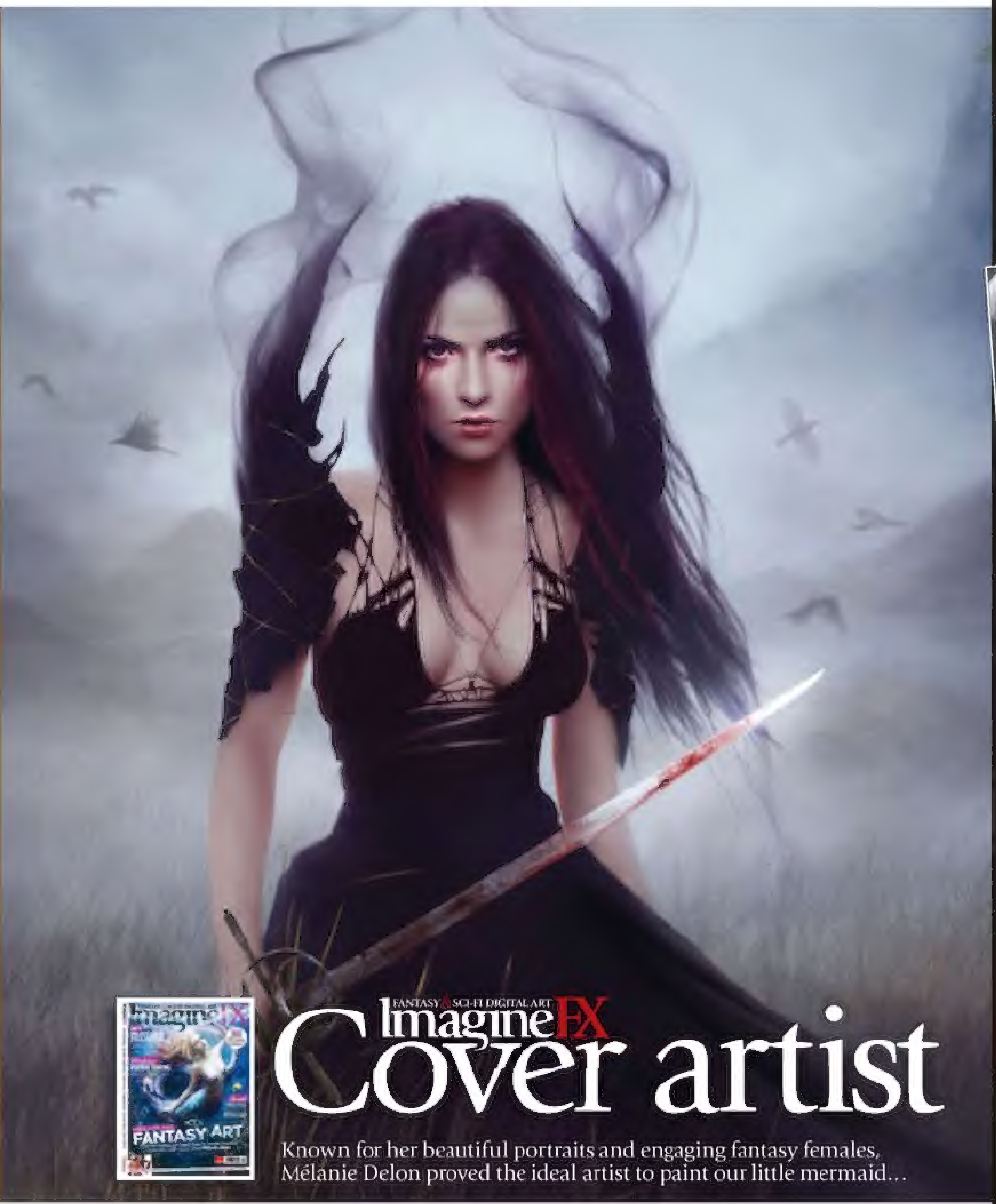
darenbader.blogspot.com



Dave Kendall

A stalwart of the UK comic scene, with work for 2000 AD among others, Dave can turn his hand to everything from Batman to a goblin king. His love of art ensures that he's always open to new mediums and often mixes traditional and digital techniques. On page 96 Dave discovers how the new tools of Corel's recently released Painter 12 can bring a fresh dimension to your fantasy and sci-fi paintings.

rustybaby.com



FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

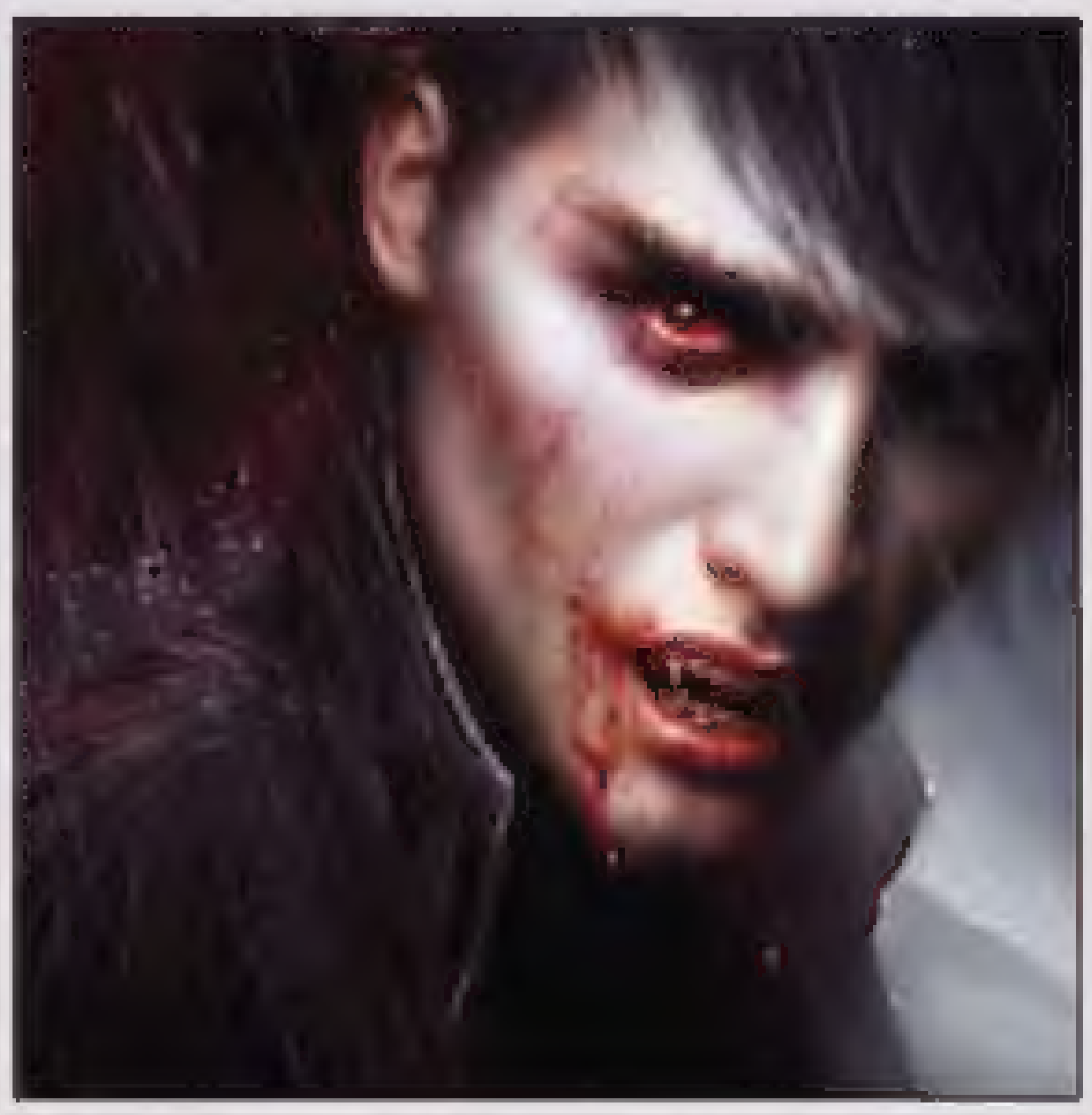
Cover artist

Known for her beautiful portraits and engaging fantasy females, Mélanie Delon proved the ideal artist to paint our little mermaid…

Mélanie Delon

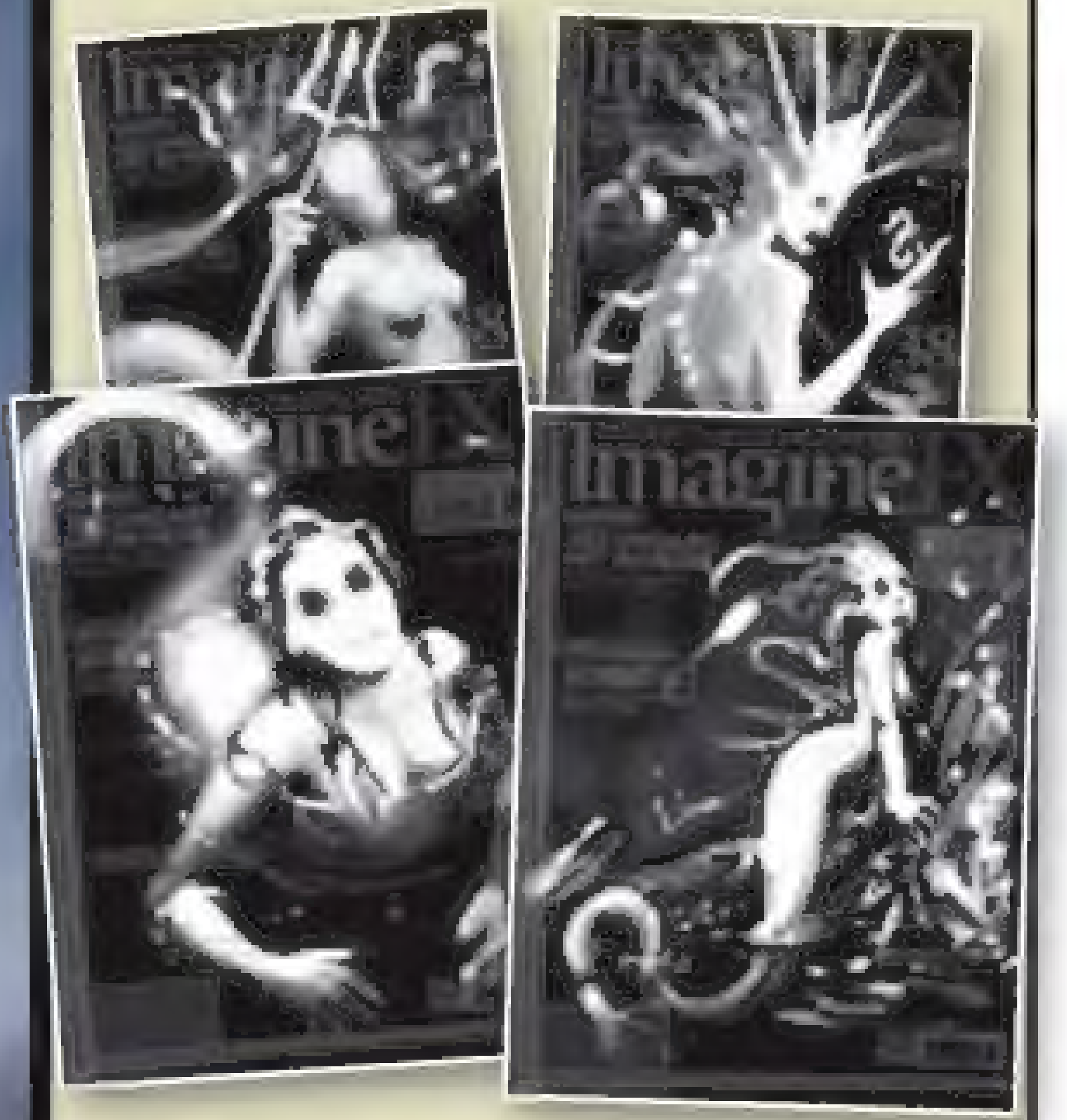
COUNTRY: France
SOFTWARE: Photoshop
WEB: melaniedelon.com

Mélanie broke onto the fantasy art scene with a collection of beautiful portraits that expressed individual mythologies. She's since become one of the industry's most sought after-artists. Indeed, her deft touch with colour and light, as well as a traditional leaning, ensured she was the perfect artist to bring this issue's mermaid theme to life.

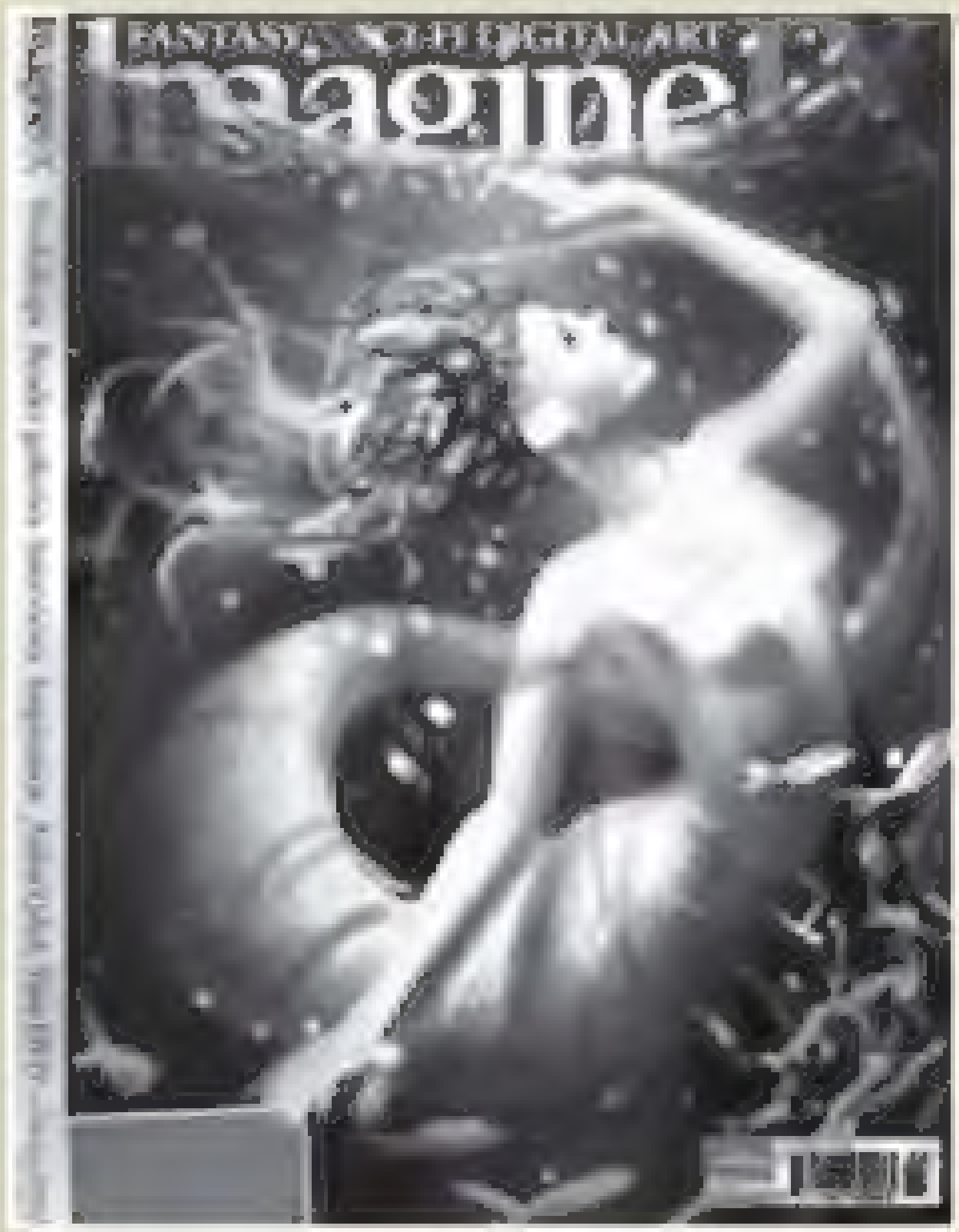


In progress

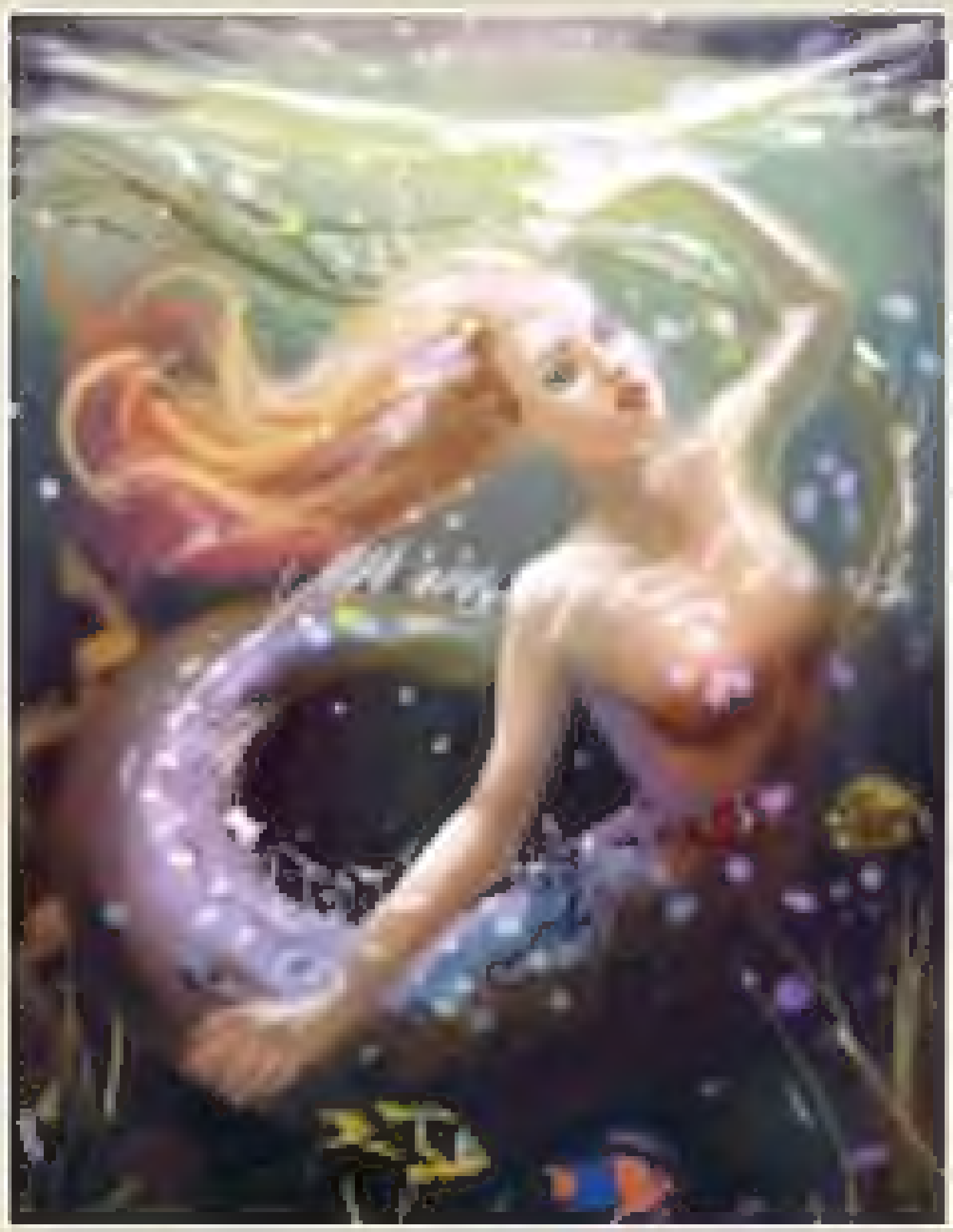
How we made a splash with our latest cover…



Once we'd decided to go with a classic mermaid theme we sent Mélanie a pitch for the cover and she came back with a clutch of sketches. After much discussion we settled on the idea of a mermaid coiled on the cover, the water lapping the masthead as she reaches for the light



We were keen to see deep blues and bright colours for the cover. We wanted to frame our mermaid in the light seeping through the waves and past the magazine masthead. We also wanted more space, less ocean floor and to see the mermaid's face. But these were easy decisions…



Fearing prudish markets around the world, we opted to conceal our mermaid's bust, but how? Mélanie hit on the idea of scales – a dress of sorts – saving our mermaid's modesty. You can see the uncut version in Mélanie's workshop on page 70.

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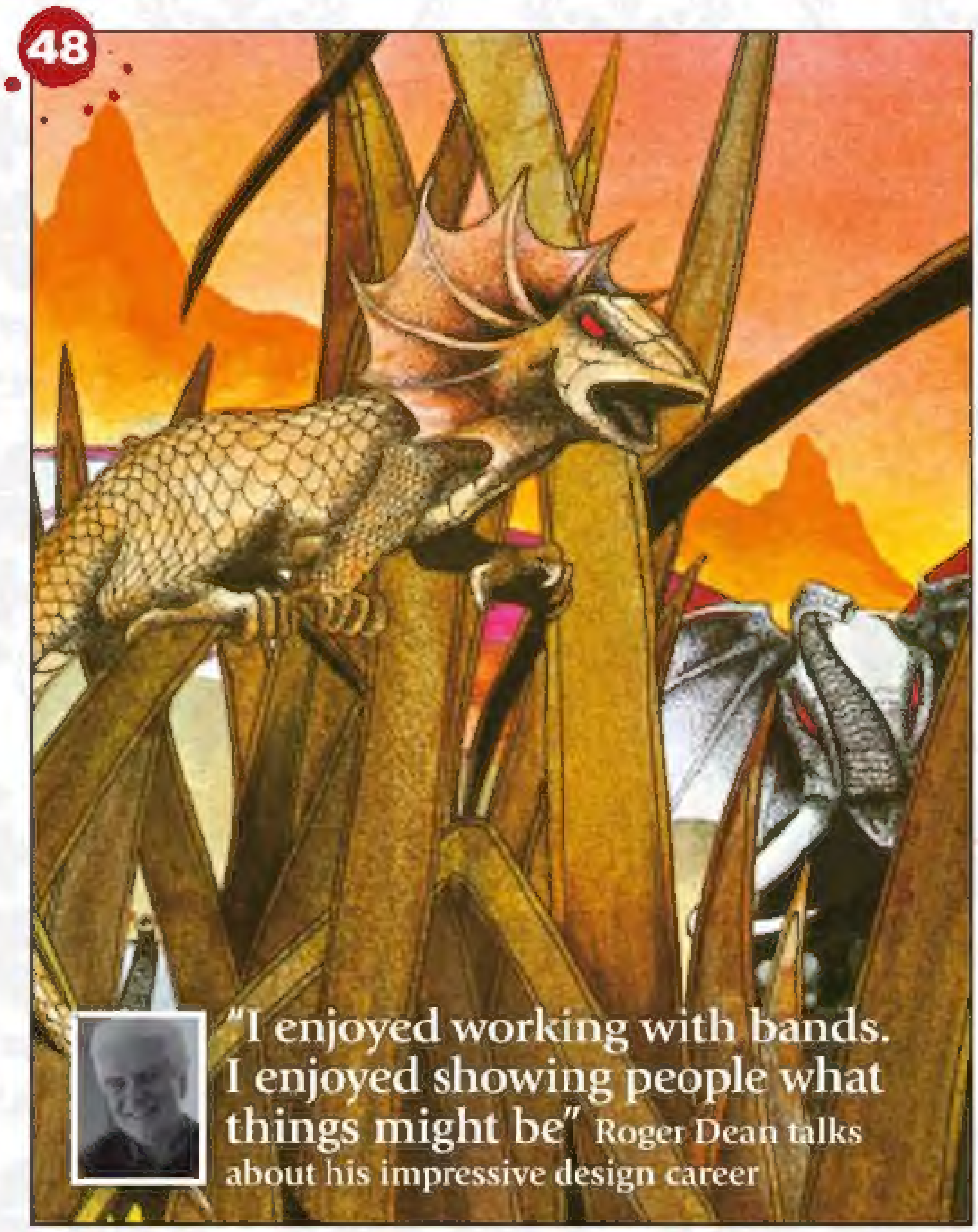

"I enjoyed working with bands. I enjoyed showing people what things might be" Roger Dean talks about his impressive design career

Reader FXPosé
THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

See page 8 for the best new art

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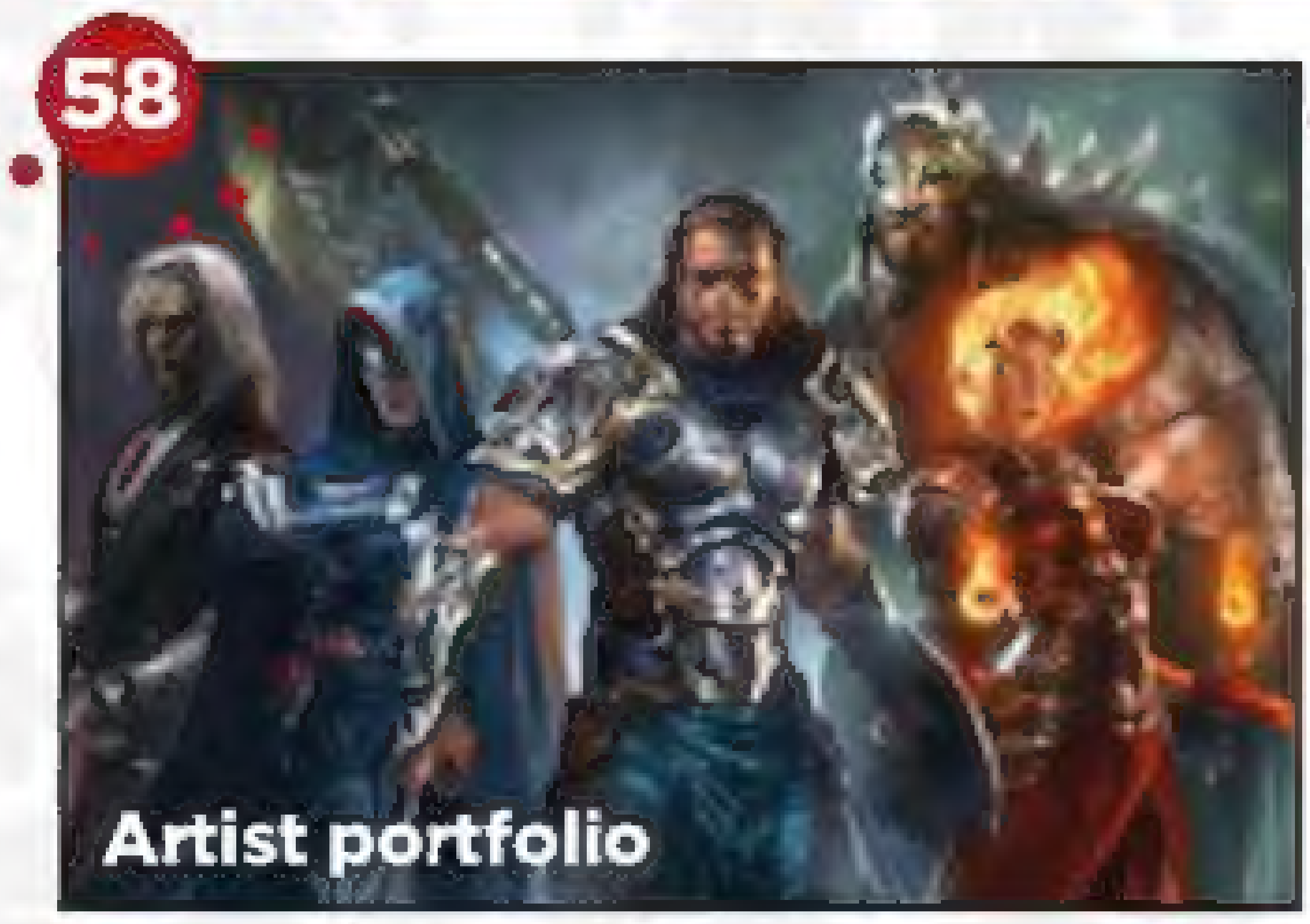
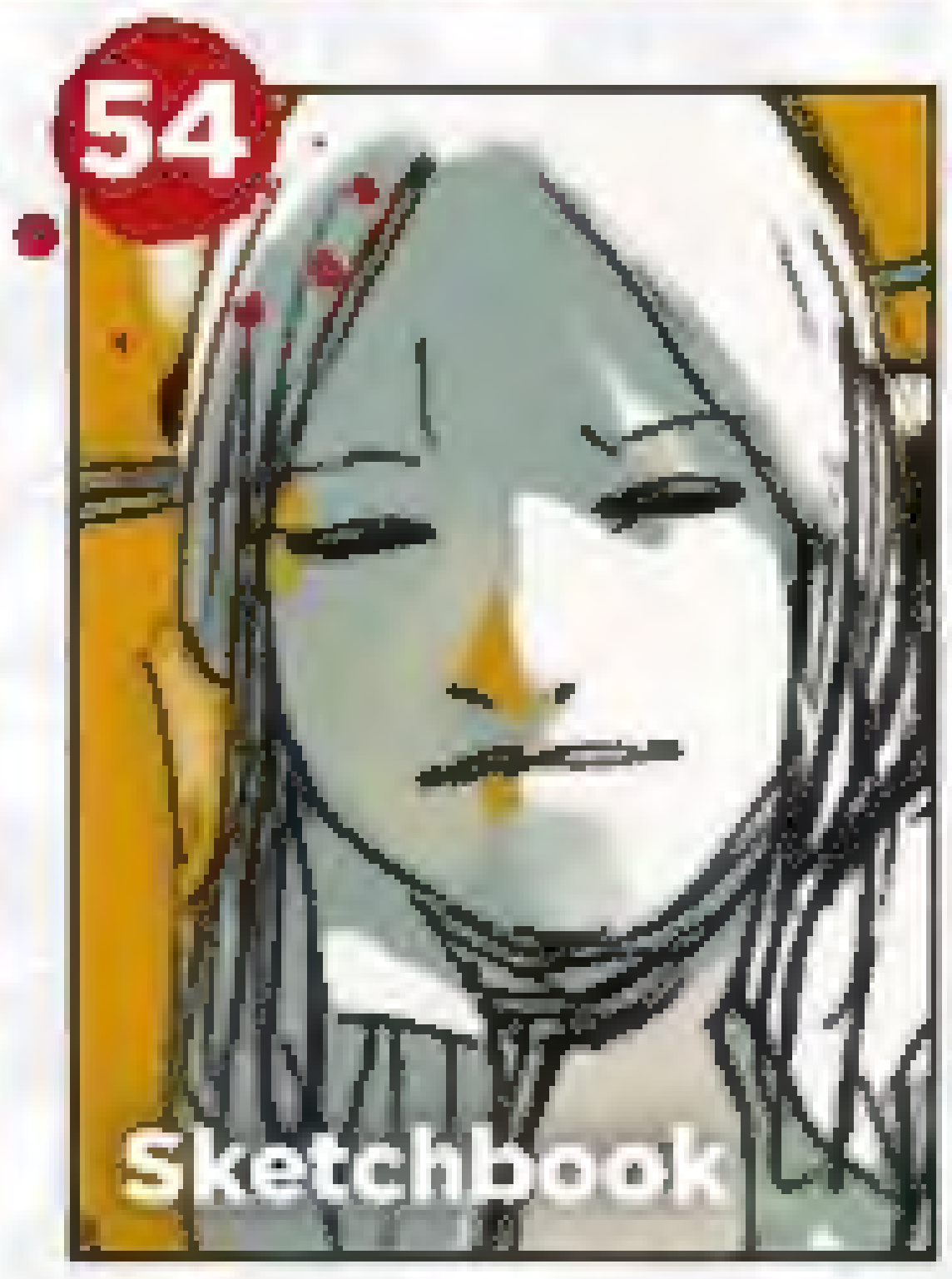
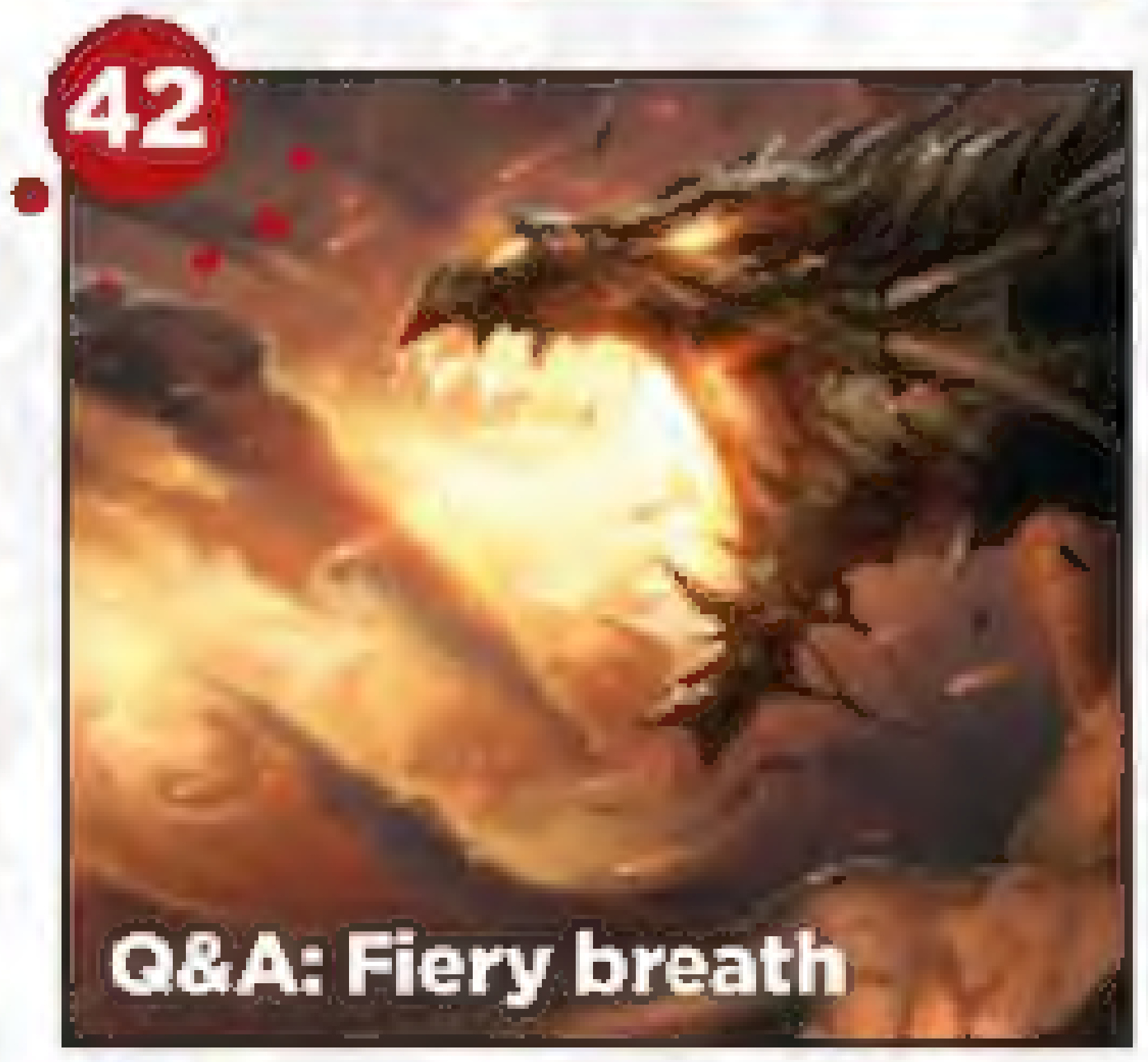
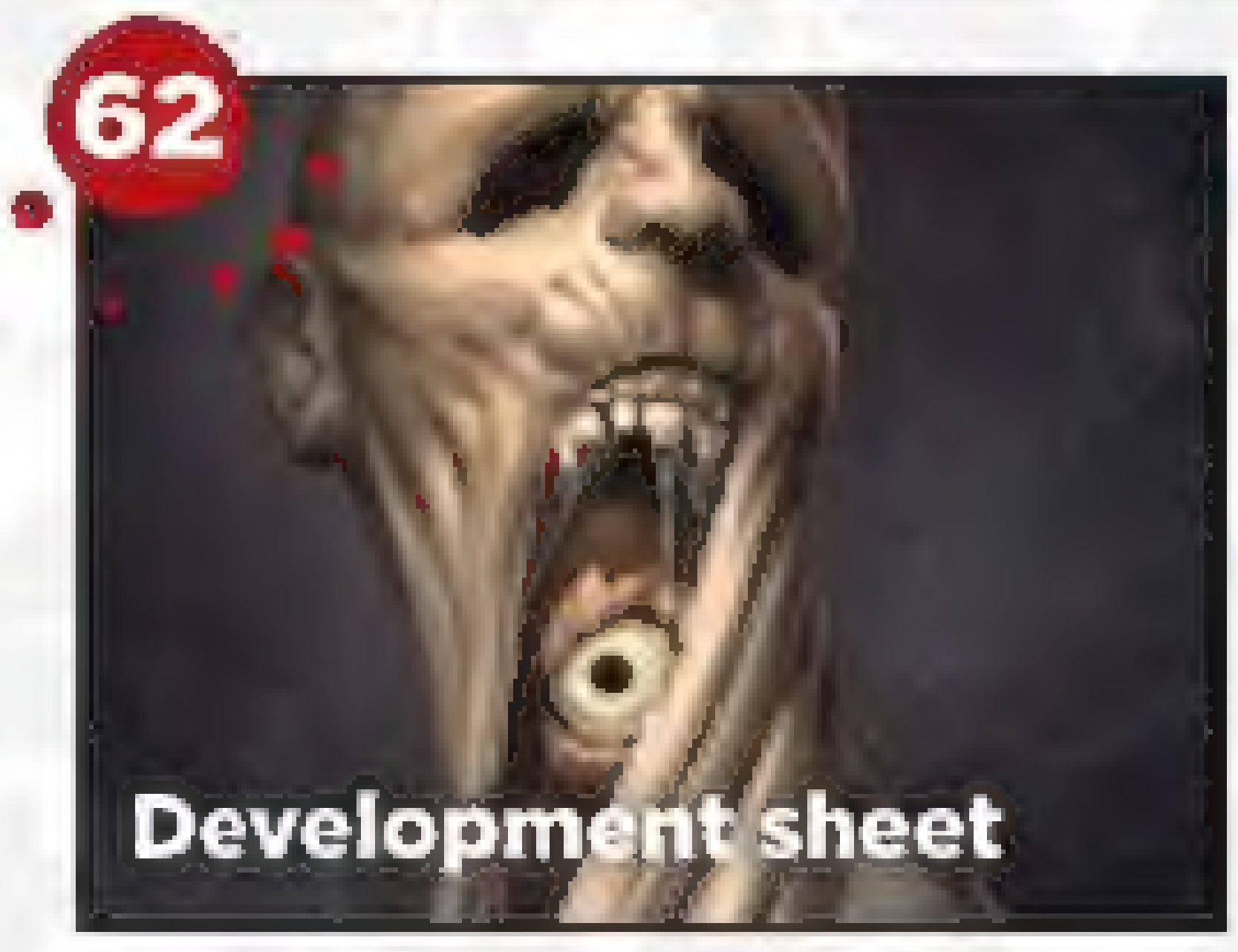
Q&A: Underpainting









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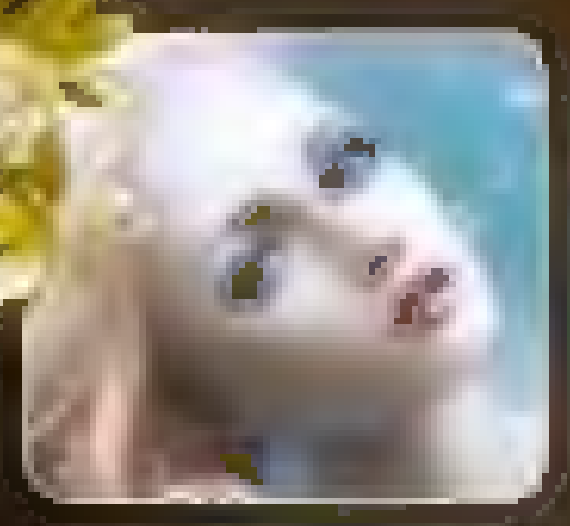
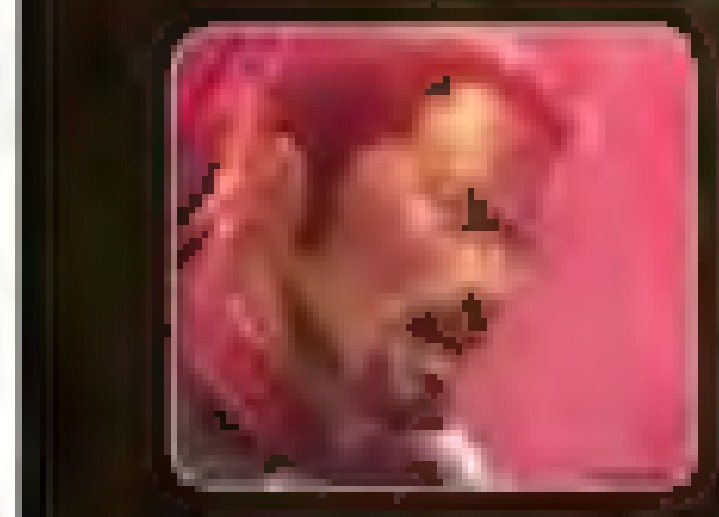
Advice and techniques
from pro artists…



70 Colour a radiant beauty of the sea
Paint underwater light with Mélanie Delon.



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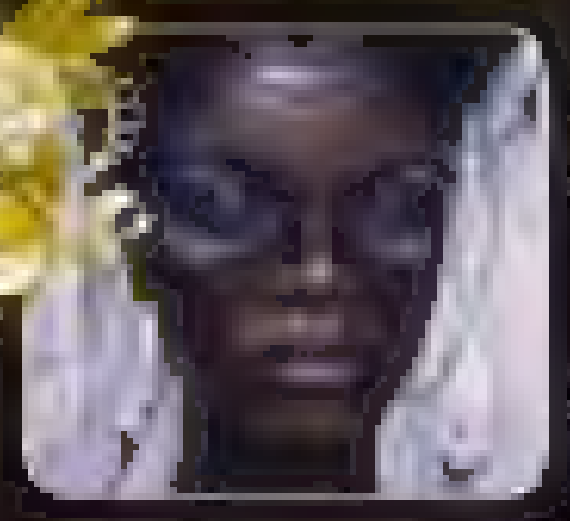
Svetlin Velinov depicts an underground fight.



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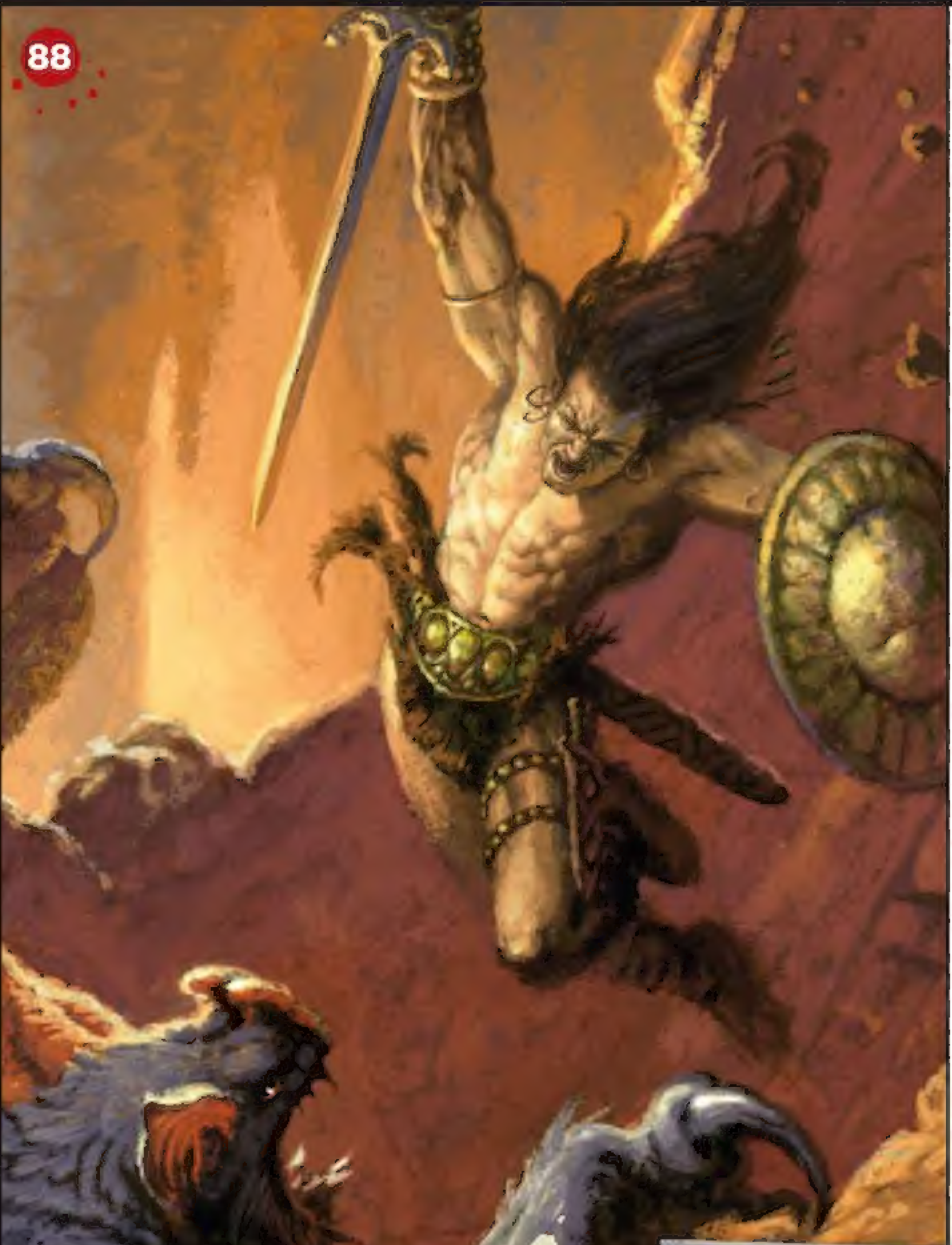
Simon Dominic explores Painter 12's new UI.

88 Learn how to age your fantasy art
"Beat up" an illustration with Daren Bader.

96 Painter's 12 Mirror mode explored
Dave Kendall uses Mirror and Kaleidoscope tools.

Artist Q&A

40 This month's Q&A topics…
Use varied edges and contours, paint golden chain mail, create dragon fire, paint gnarled bark, alter the time of day, define a monster's muscles and more!



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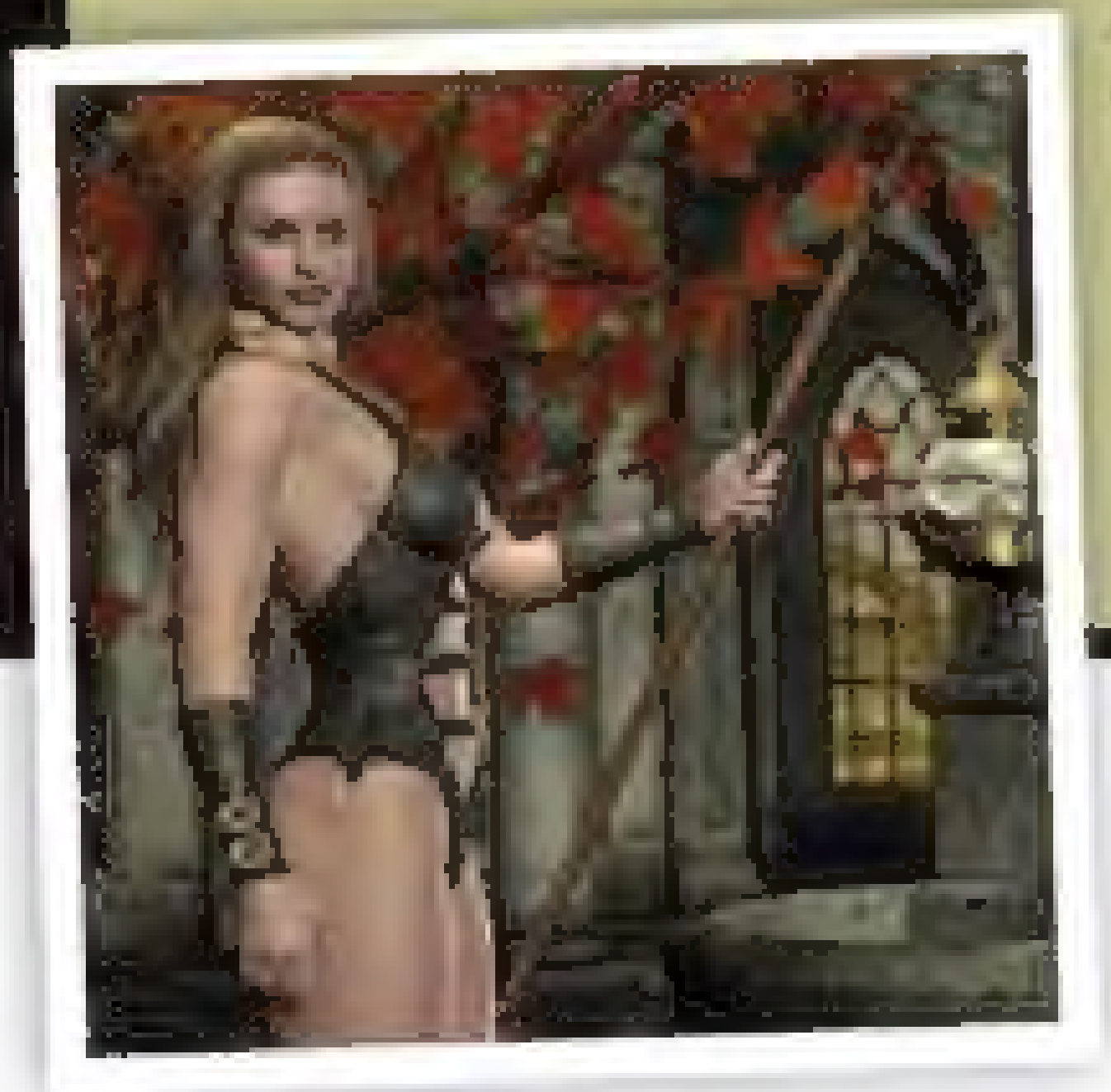
Turn to page 114 for more…

ON YOUR DVD

This month's essential art resources…



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ImagineFX
LEARN TO PAINT CLASSIC FANTASY ART

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Andrew Silver

LOCATION: US
WEB: andrewsilverart.com
EMAIL: andrew@andrewsilverart.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop

In college Andrew gravitated toward digital art after his roommate introduced him to a Wacom tablet. "It wasn't until a teacher showed me that I can go back and forth between digital and traditional techniques on the same piece that my work took a leap forward," he says.

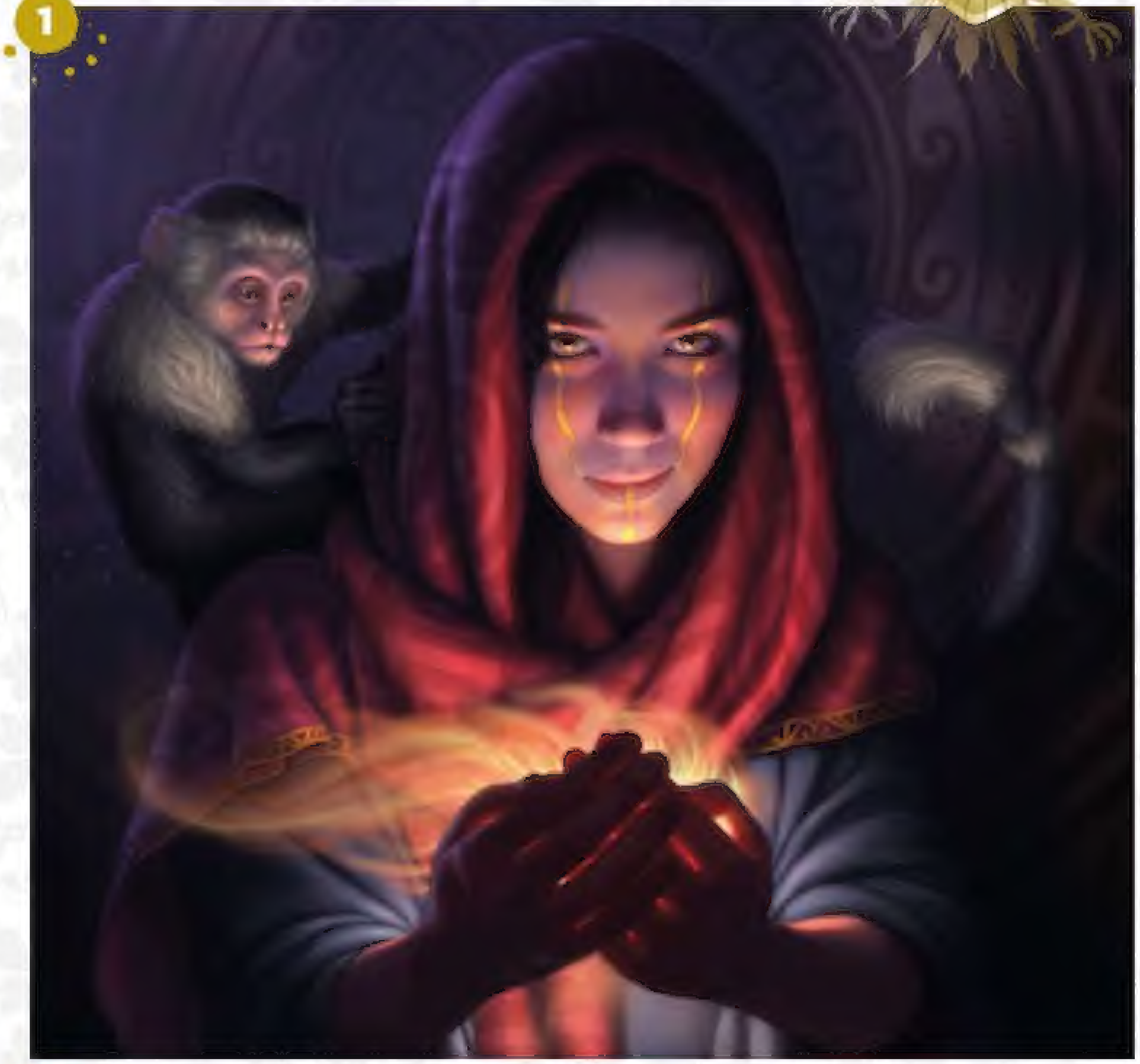
Now all Andrew's sketches are done in Photoshop. He then prints out a light version of the sketch on heavy paper and draws in pencil over that. "I then scan that in and finish things in Photoshop."

1 **HEALER** "This piece started out as an image that's been stuck in my head ever since I saw the famous National Geographic photograph Afghan Girl. I also love painting animals."

2 **SLEEP PARALYSIS** "This was done after reading an article on sleep paralysis: a really freaky disorder where you can't move and hallucinate upon waking up. I was also deathly afraid of monsters under the bed when I was little. I finally stopped being afraid of them when I finished this painting. Maybe I'll have to paint some clowns soon, too!"

3 **SPACE MECHANIC** "I wanted to paint a mechanic in his space ship engine room, but I didn't want it to be as simple as that. I was then introduced to the TV series Firefly and knew exactly how to make it more interesting, so I turned the character into someone you wouldn't expect to see."

1



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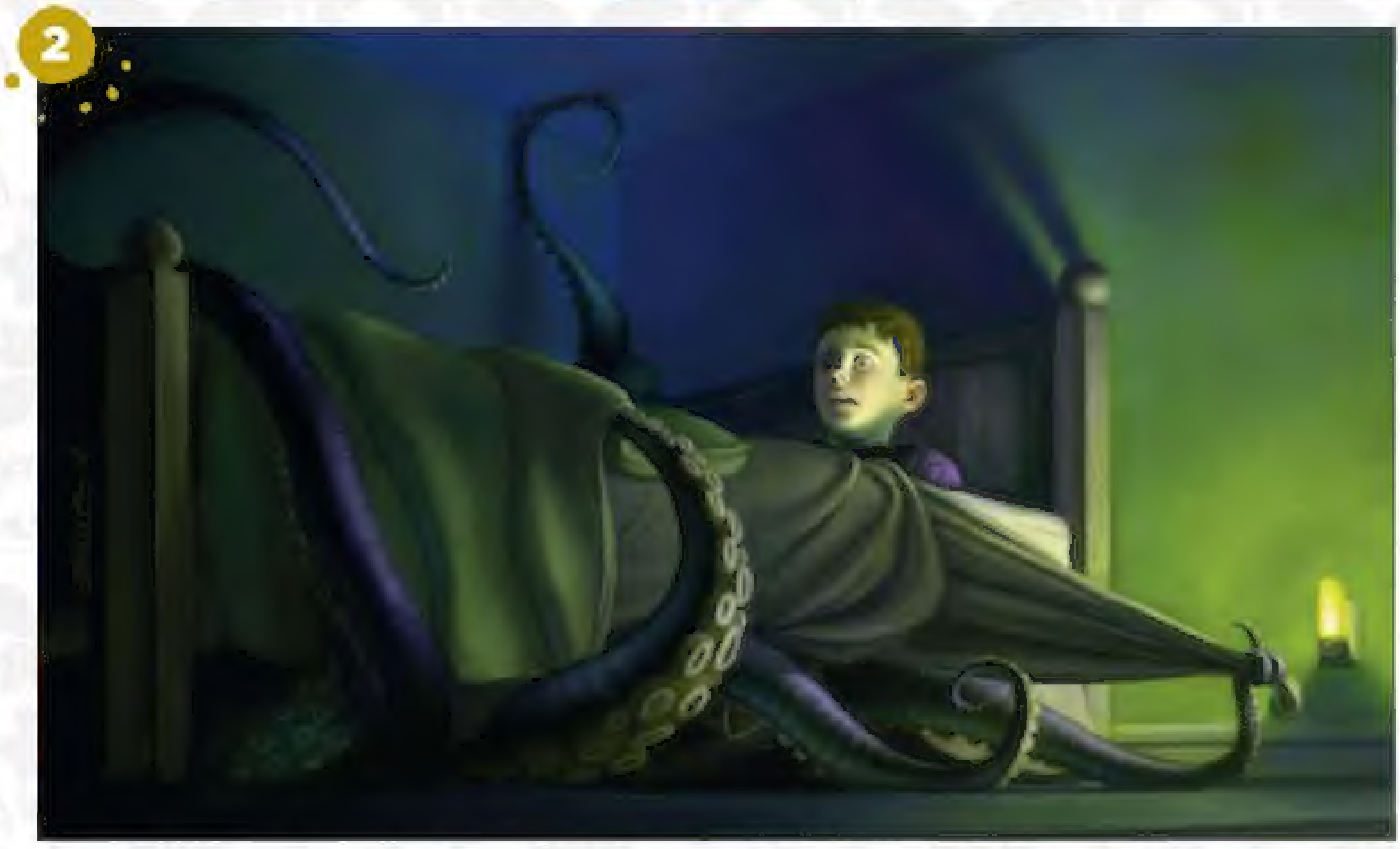
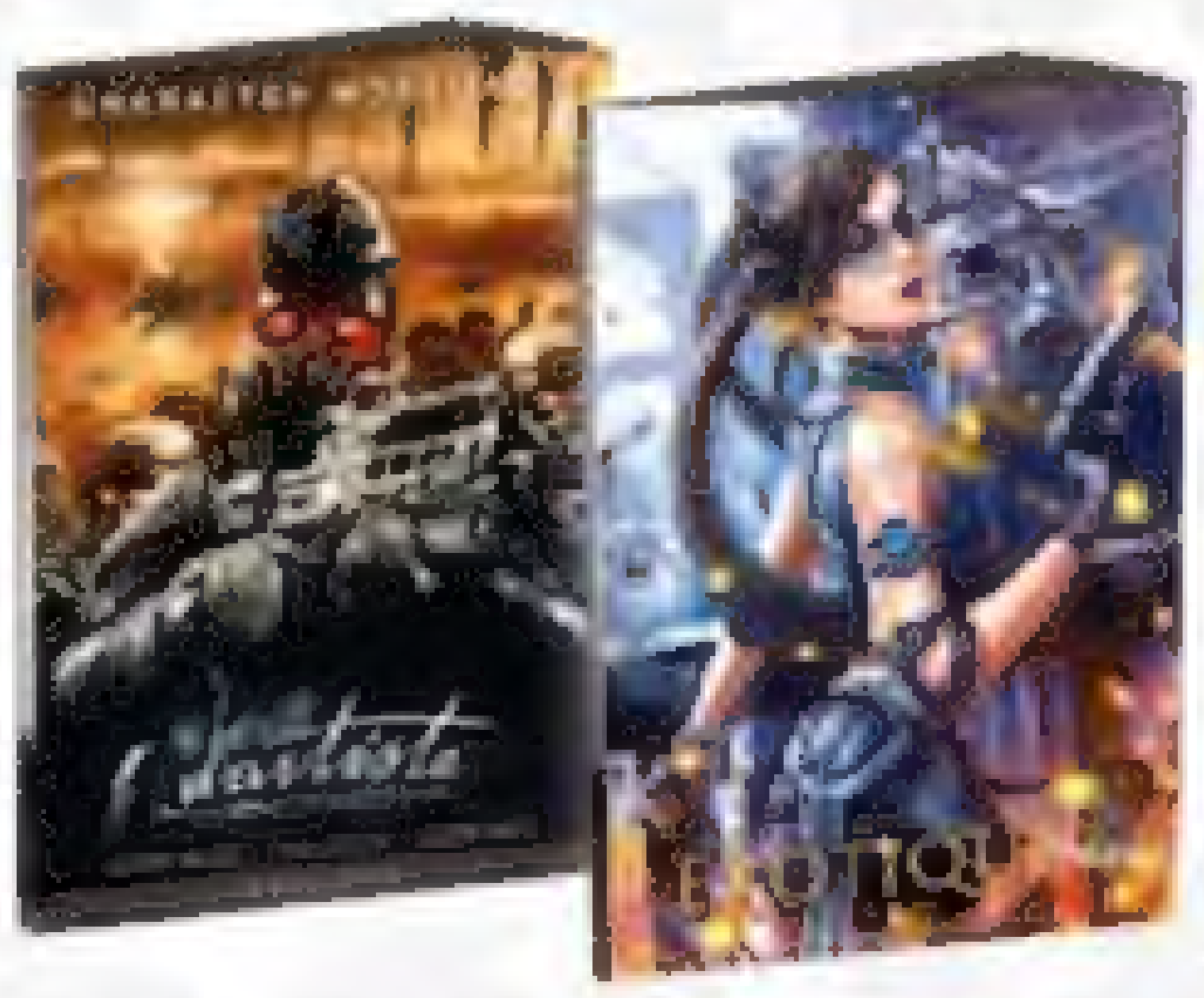




ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Congratulations Andrew – you've won a copy of Exotique 6 and Character Modeling 3! To find out more about these two indispensable art resources, go to ballisticpublishing.com.

Artist crit

Creature illustrator Brynn Metheney finds herself pulled into the world of Andrew's art

"What makes these fantasy images so convincing is the use of lighting and the artist's attention to detail. They have wonderful drama! Andrew has done a great job balancing reference with his imagination!"

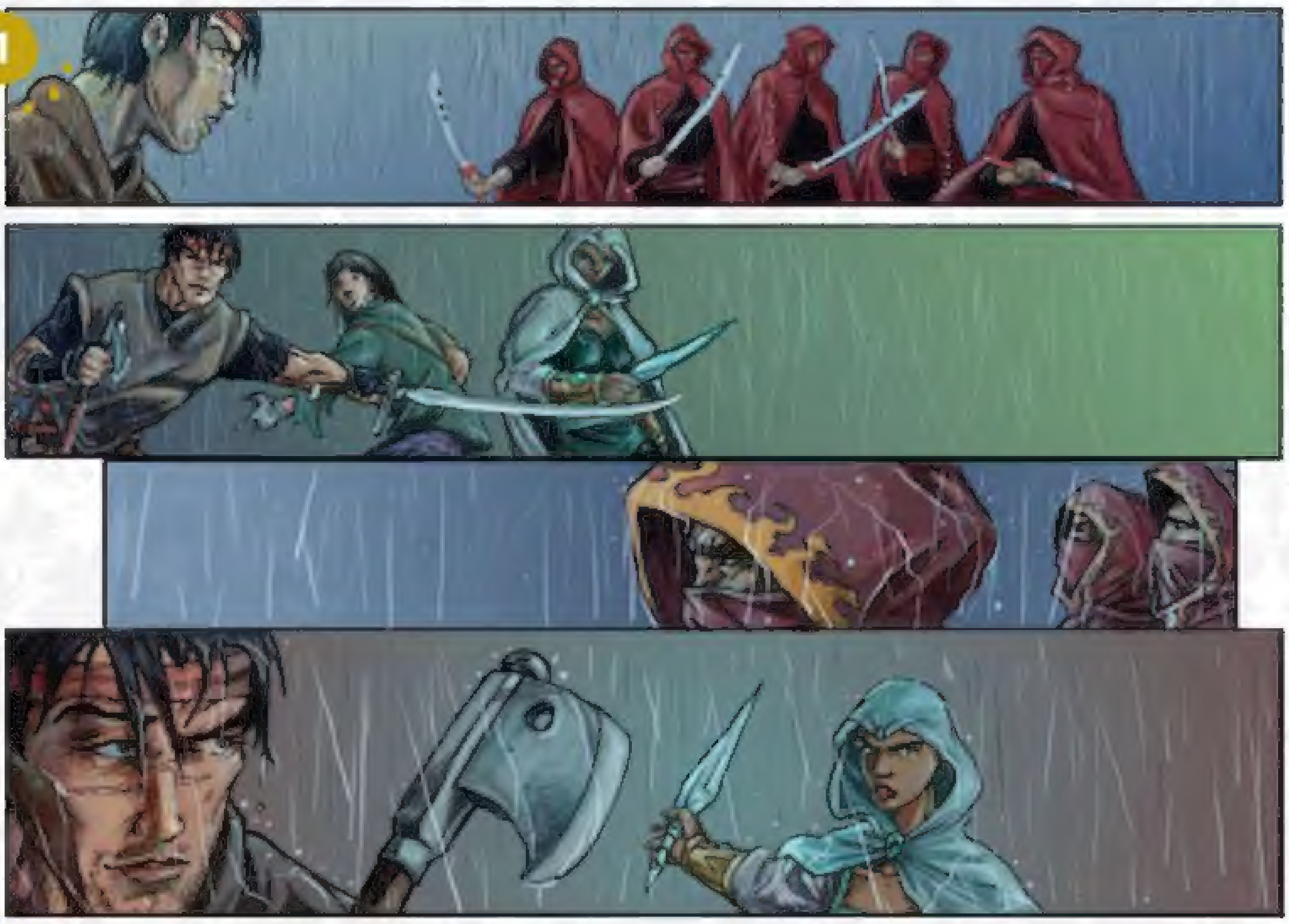
Storn Cook

LOCATION: US
WEB: bit.ly/storncook
EMAIL: storn.cook@gmail.com
SOFTWARE: Painter, Photoshop

Leaving the humble hills of Ithaca, New York at the age of 17 to pursue art at New York University, Storn soon decided that his fine art degree didn't allow him to indulge his real love – illustration.

"Many years later I attended the much more commercial and illustrative-minded Columbus College of Art & Design," he says, "which gave me the discipline, tools and knowledge that I'll spend the rest of my life trying to hone. I've worked in the role-playing game field for almost two decades now."

1



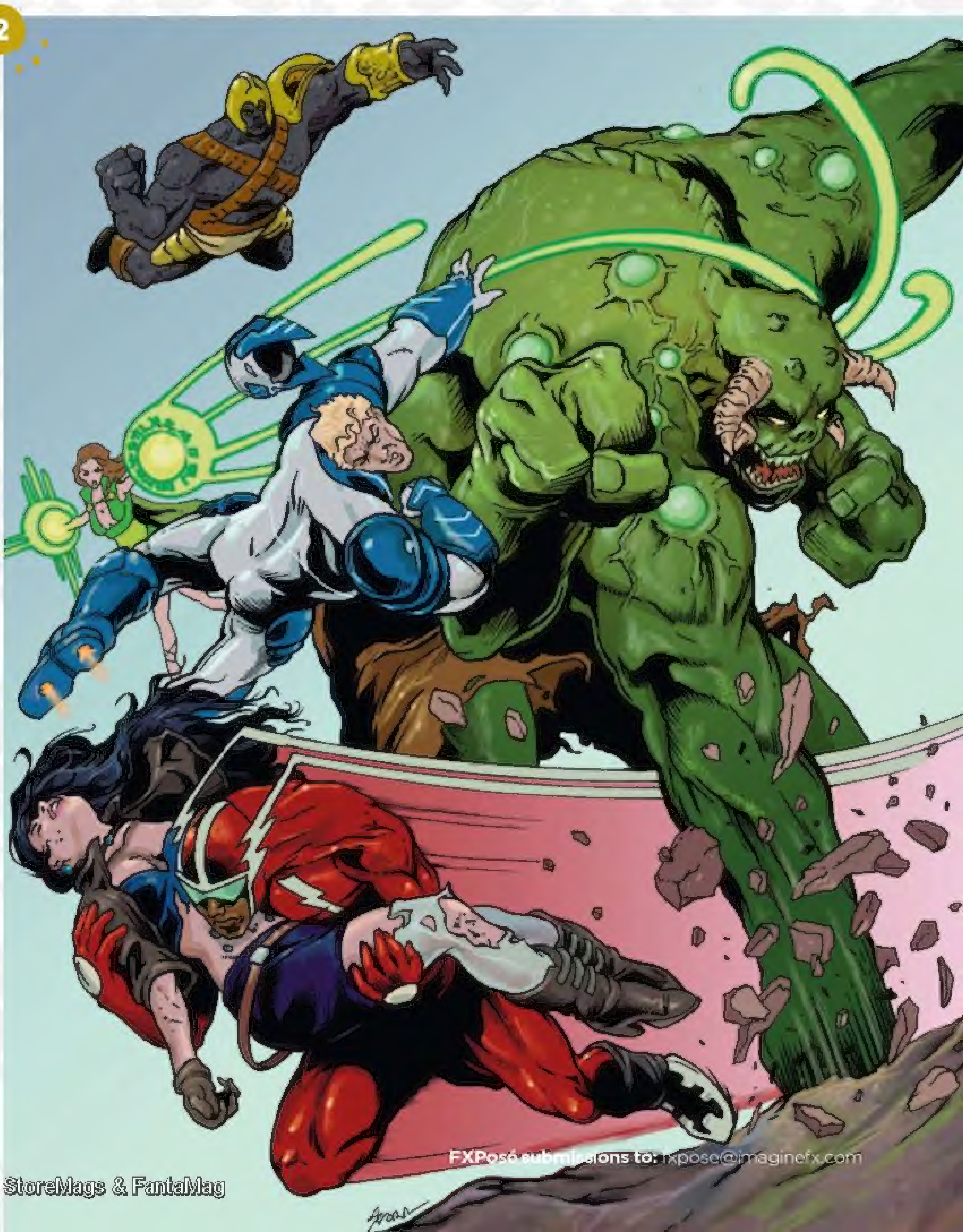
1 CATSPAW "This is my experiment with web comics. I wanted to recreate that 'dirty' watercolour look over pencils. I flittered between Photoshop and Painter for this one."

2 GROND! "I often use digital colour to do what I call comic book colouring. I used Photoshop to block-in the image and finish most of the special effects, while blending, shadows and highlights were done in Painter. I've drawn Grond several times over the year, which is a character owned by Hero Games."

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Storn's superhero composition manages to fill the frame with dynamic action and a multi-limbed creature, all the while keeping the set-up clean and readable. Great work from the artist."
Ian Dean, Deputy Editor

2



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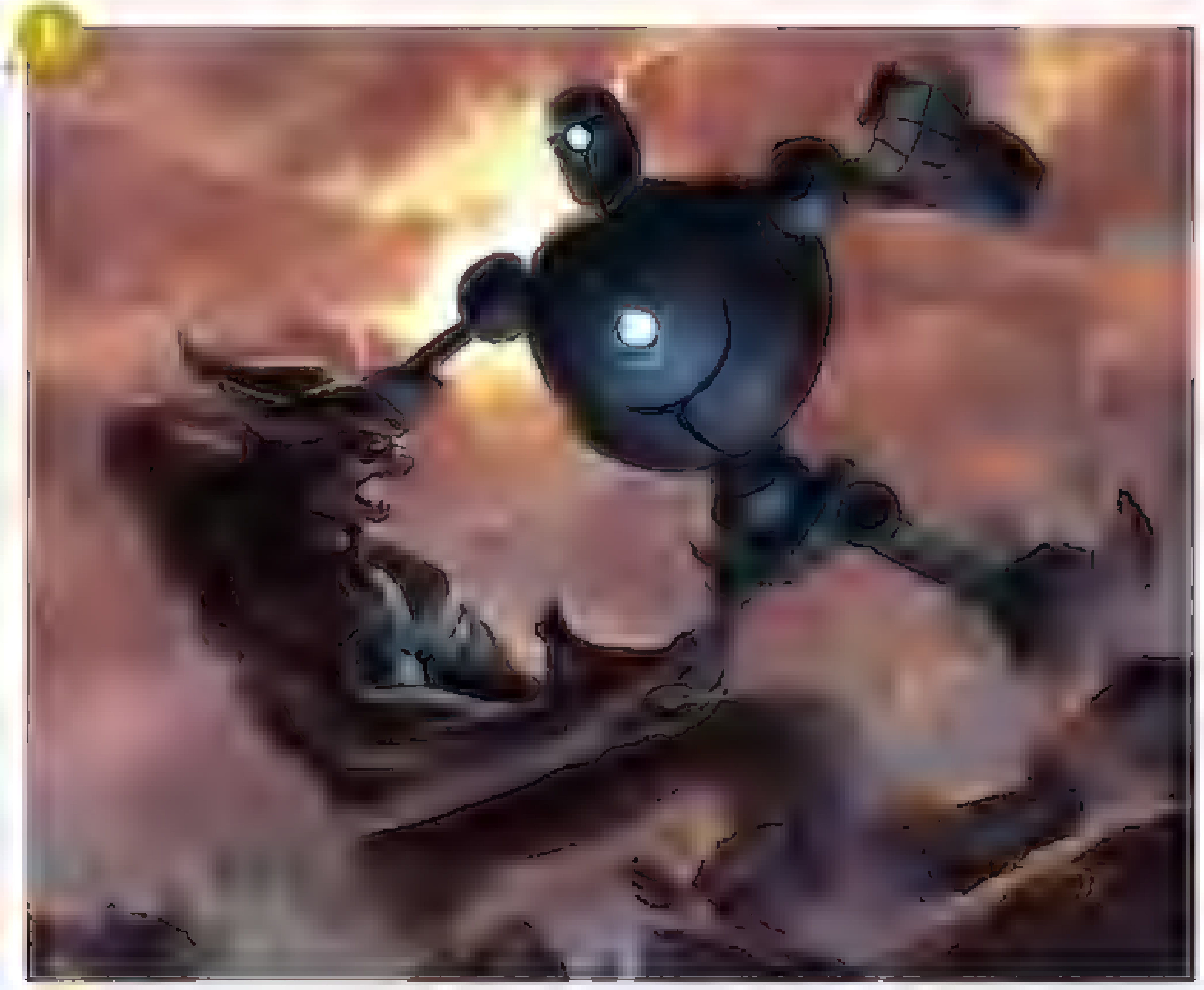


Dan Masso

LOCATION: US
WEB: danmasso.com
EMAIL: danjmasso@gmail.com
SOFTWARE: Painter, Photoshop

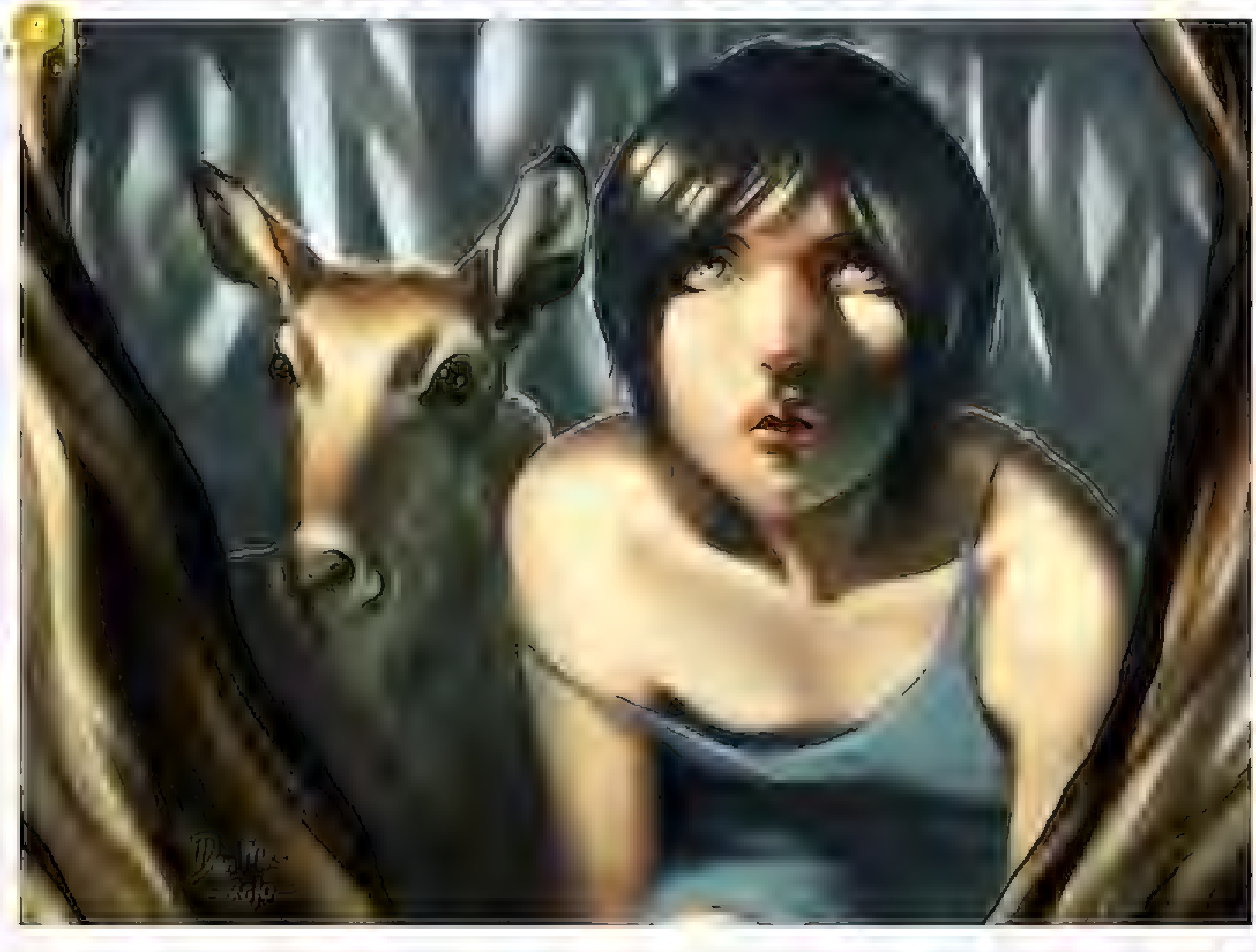
Dan is a freelance illustrator living in New York. "I have many aspirations, but mostly I want to do book covers and Magic: The Gathering cards," he says. "I'd also love to write and draw comics, and create concept art."

After interning at Marvel Entertainment, Dan is now working on numerous projects including licensed artwork for Lucasfilm and the Topps Company for their Star Wars trading cards, as well as work in the tabletop gaming industry.

1 **ROBOT VS MONSTER** "I attempted to use different brushes to give texture to the clouds, rocks and the metal of the robot. I felt that I had failed on the robot and so I slapped on a metallic texture."

2 **DEER** "Once the flat colours were put down the focus was on the face of the girl. I rendered the whole image with some texture brush experimentation on the deer. This was my first attempt to push and pull – I've since improved my technique!"

2

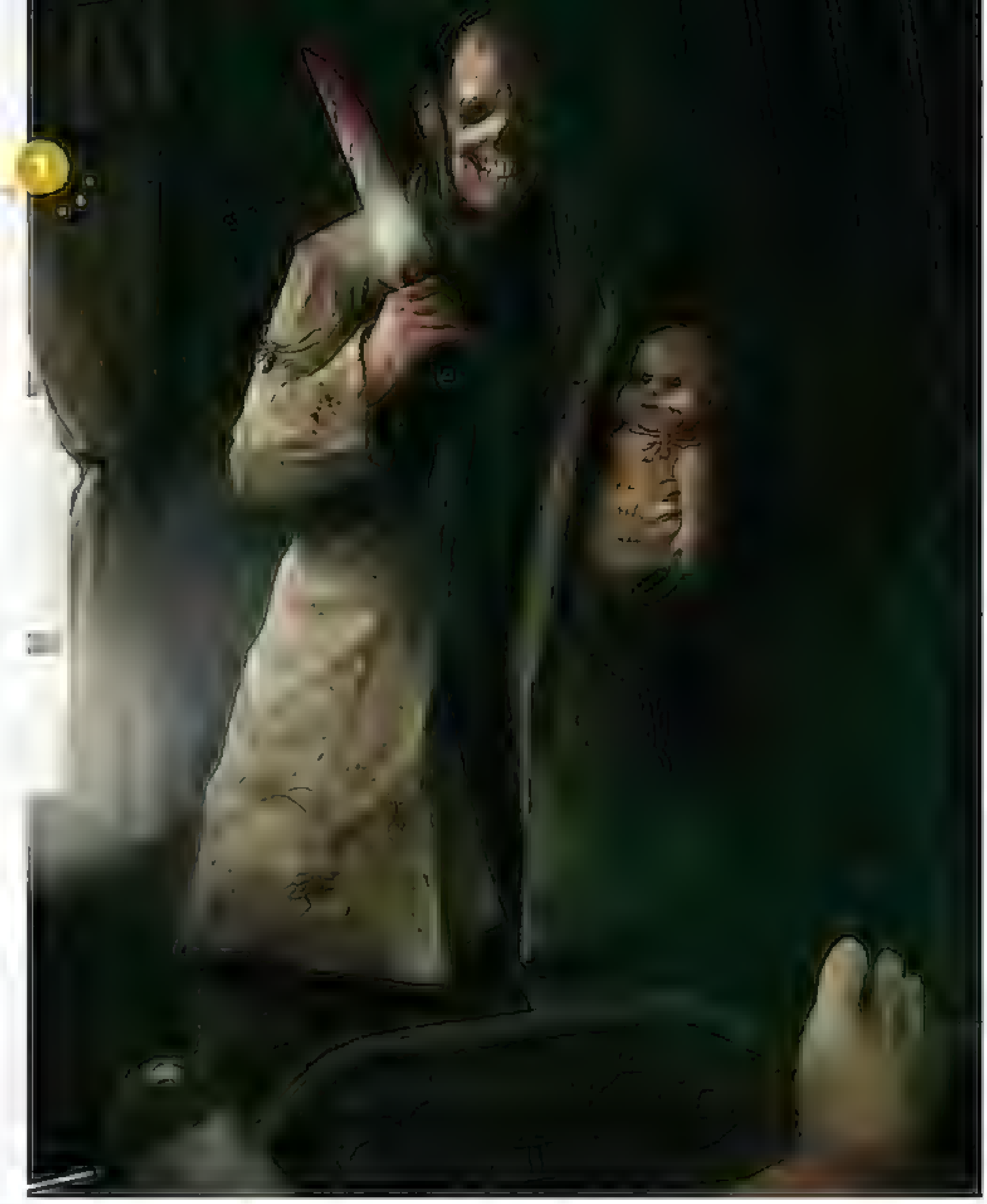


Brendan Deboy

Australia
brendandeboy.com
contact@brendandeboy.com
Photoshop

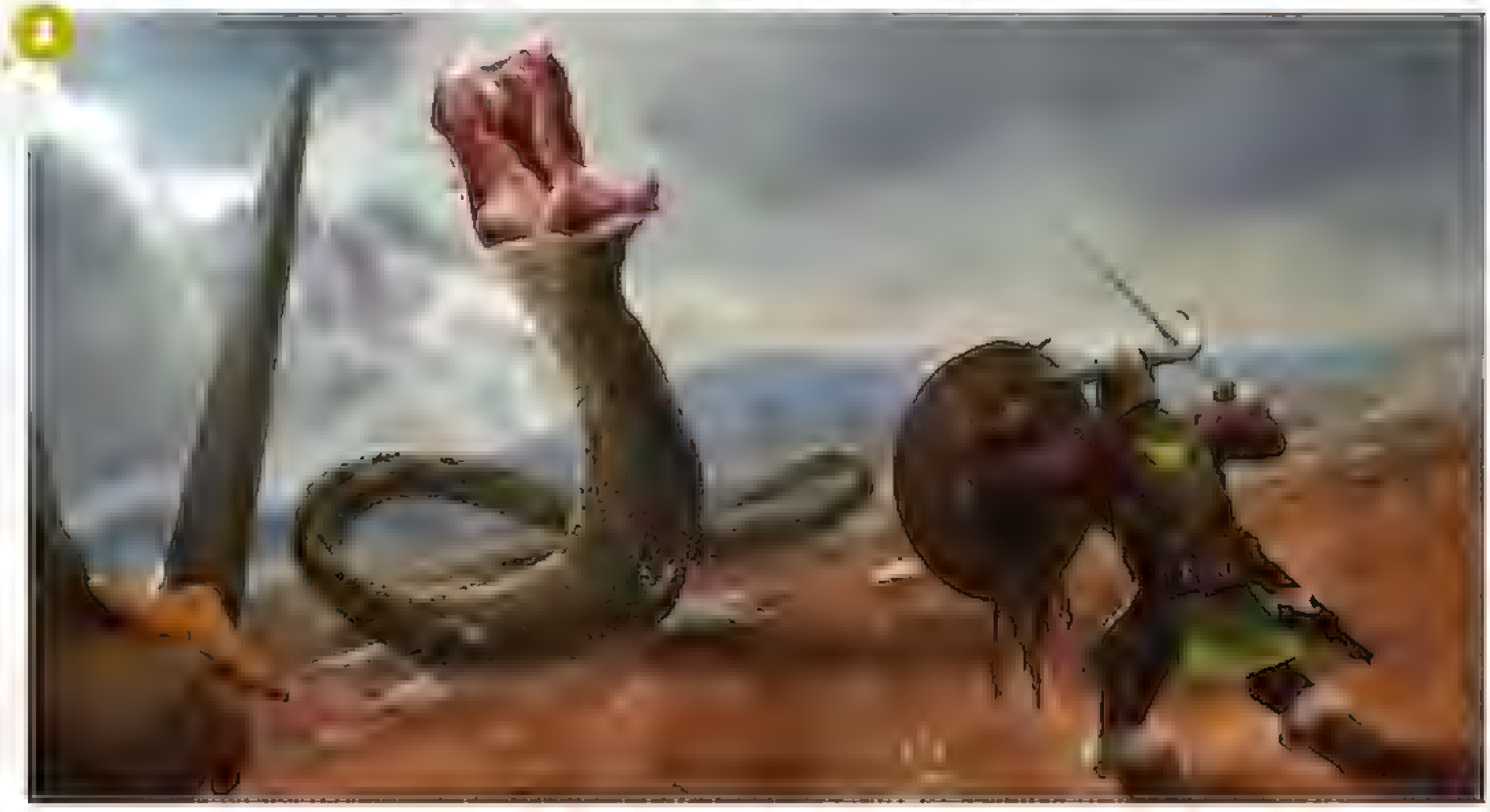
Currently working in the games industry as a full-time concept artist, Brendan had a strange collection of influences when he was a kid. "Common themes included gremlins and Volkswagens," he says, "but I was always inspired by a lot of fantasy art, particularly that of the inky, whimsical woodcut-esque variety."

Having bought his first cheap tablet with money he'd earned pushing trolleys around a parking lot, Brendan soon discovered a world of artistic possibility. "These days, I enjoy natural and digital media equally, and I'm still amazed and super-appreciative at how blessed I am to have made a career out of something I love so much."



1 **THE BOGEYMAN** "Everybody seems to have their own idea of what the infamous bogeyman looks like. I wanted to create something that would be equally as scary to adults as it would be to children. The huntsman spiders crawling over him are a reference to my one of my own phobias."

2 **MARSH VIPER** "This was the result of a self-assigned dummy brief. I selected a random card from a role-playing game and illustrated it based only on the description from the title. It took every ounce of self-control not to look at the original picture before I had finished my take on it, but in the end I think the result made it worthwhile."

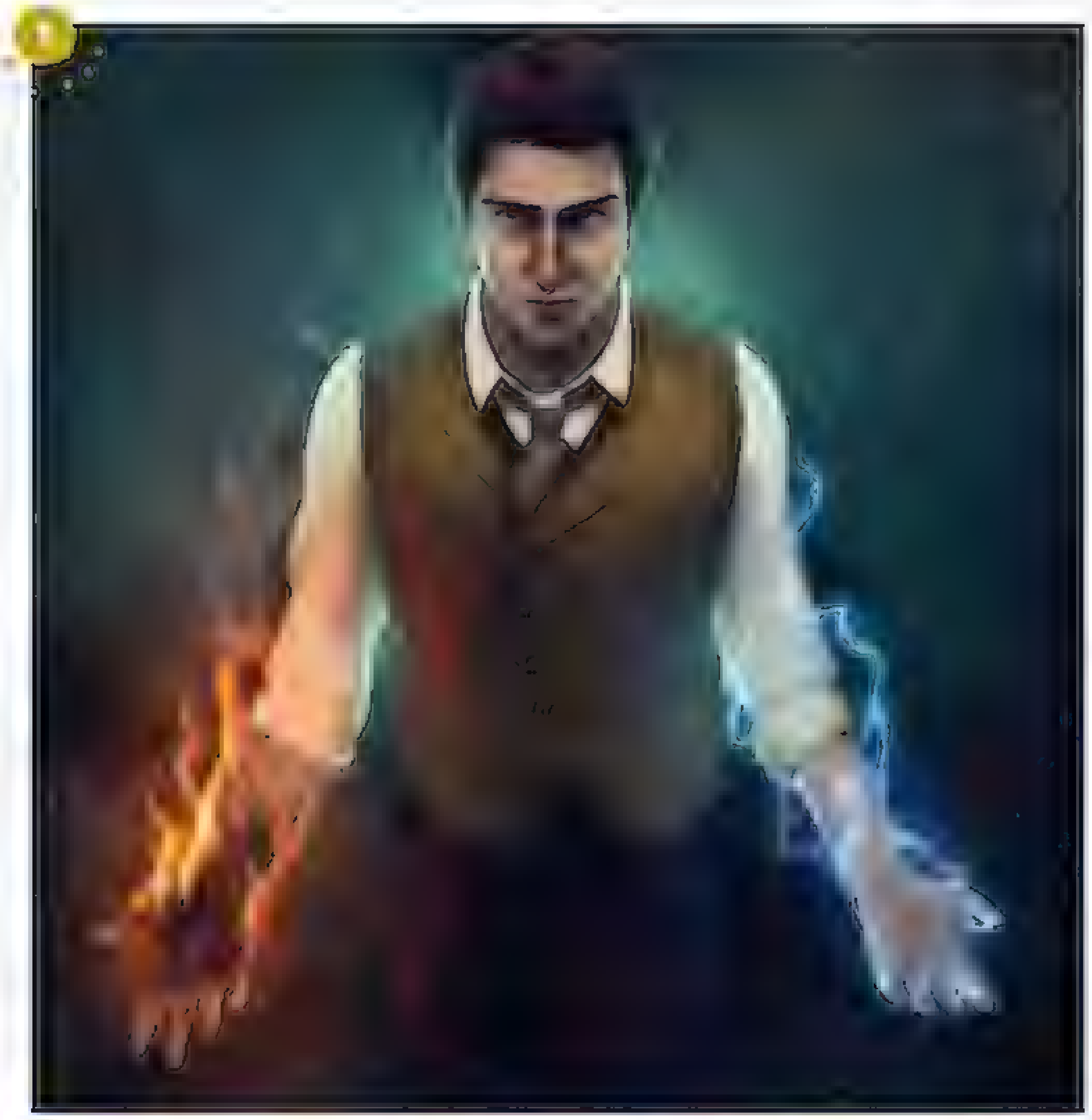


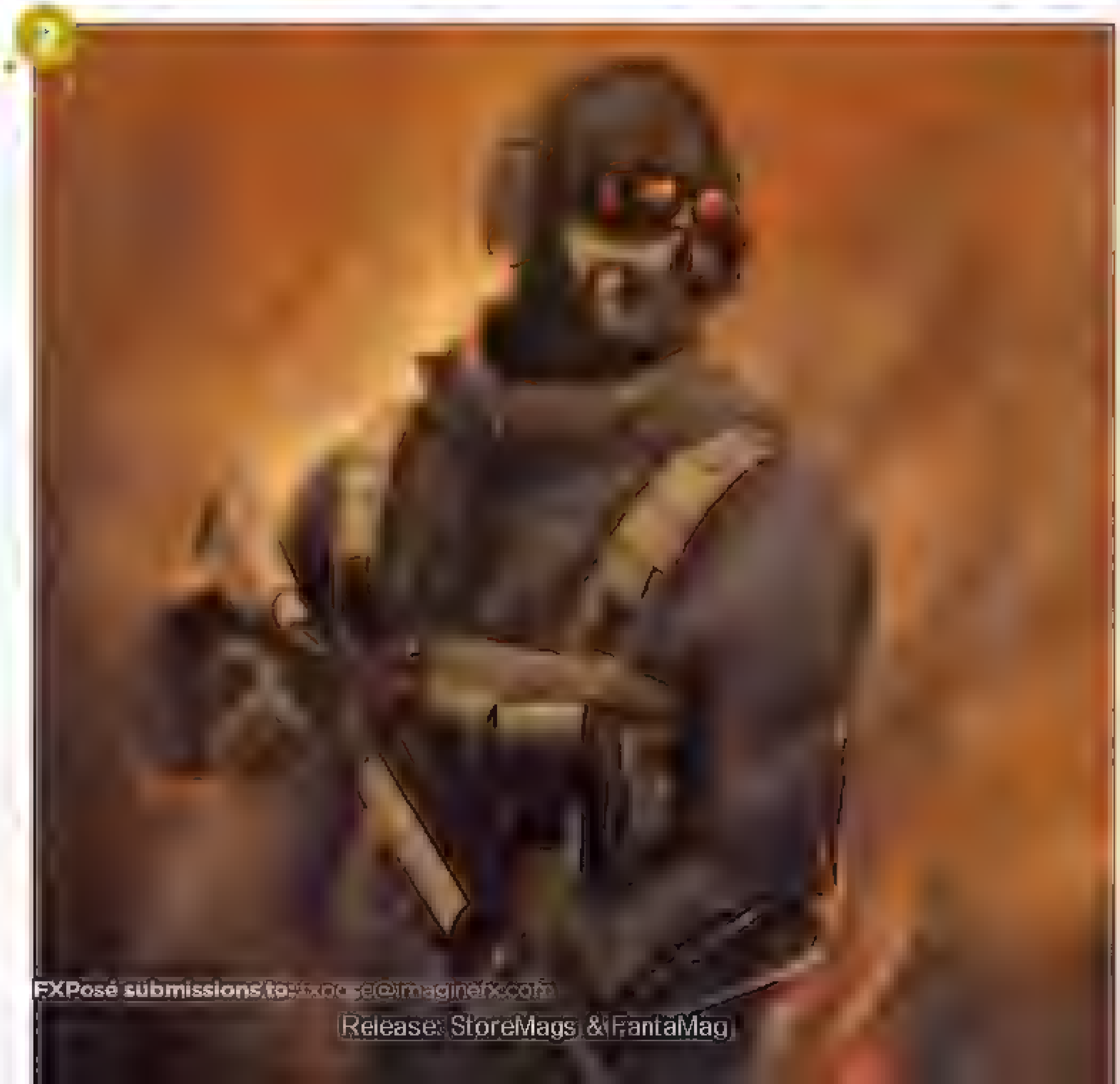
Houston Sharp

LOCATION: US
WEB: gt-mebabyme.deviantart.com
EMAIL: hpsvg@hotmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop

Eighteen-year-old Houston's first forays into digital art have shown signs of promise. "I've just finished high school, where I sold many drawings and paintings to teachers and staff," says the self-taught artist.

"Online tutorials have really helped me hone my skills," says Houston. After seeing some ImagineFX YouTube speed paints he bought himself a new Wacom tablet. "I couldn't tell if I was in love with it, or if I was obsessed and had a serious problem. I spent countless hours with the tablet, just messing around."





FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com

1 **SELF-PORTRAIT** "This piece was inspired by BioShock 2. I really liked the idea of plasmids, the rewritten DNA and the almost-horror theme. While playing the game I had the intention of doing a self-portrait, but I wasn't sure of how I wanted it to turn out. So I combined the idea of rewritten DNA with my own self."

2 **GHOST** "I loved the campaign of Infinity Ward's Modern Warfare 2, and I felt that the characters were very well done. The most symbolic of the characters was Ghost, so I decided to do an illustration of him. With this painting, I wanted to get a feeling of triumph, but I also wanted to emphasise a symbol of the character's fate: fire."

IMAGINEFX CRIT

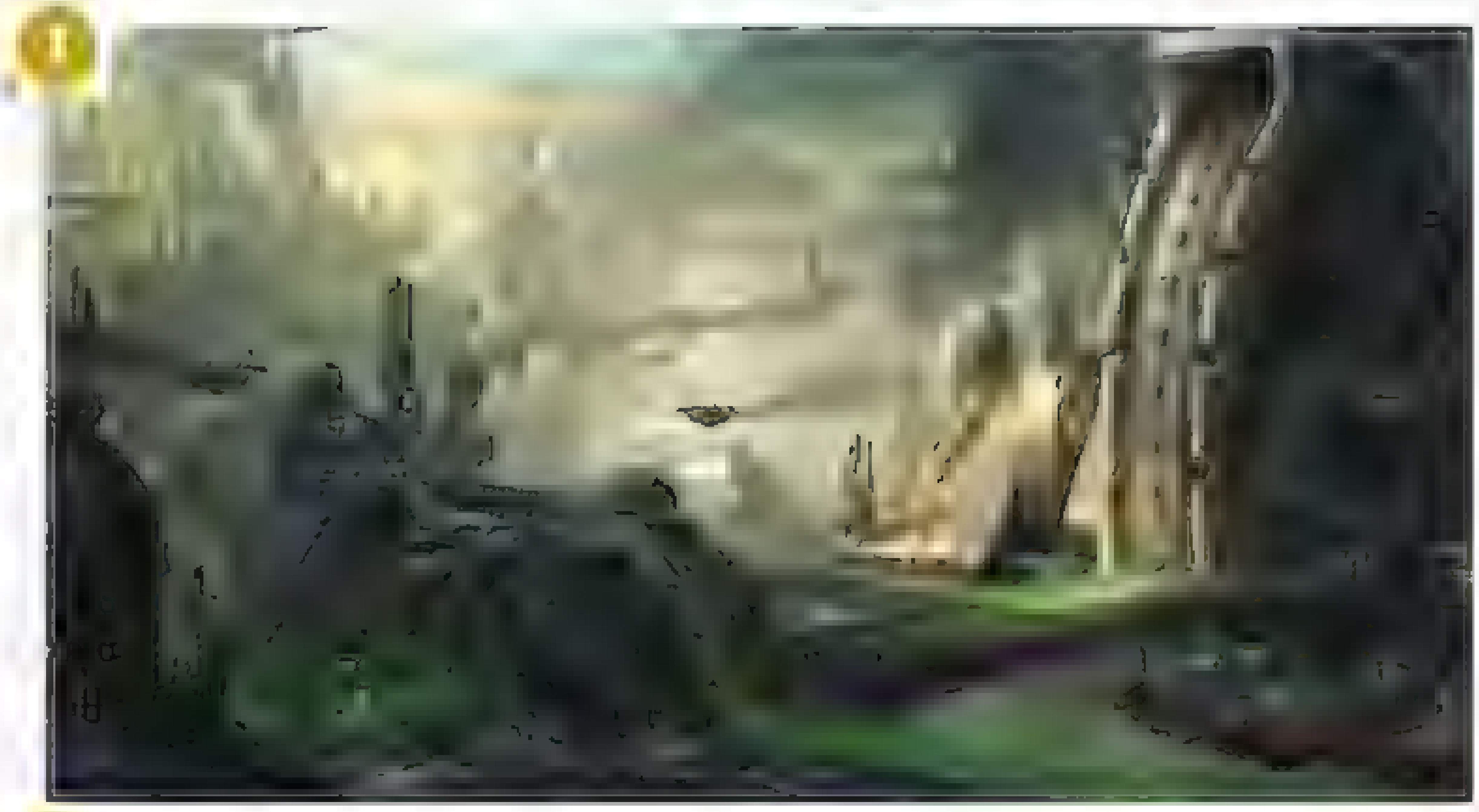
"Anyone familiar with BioShock or Modern Warfare 2 will instantly recognise Houston's inspiration, which is testament to his skill. I love his mix of self-portrait and fan art!"
Claire Howlett
Editor

Mark Castanon

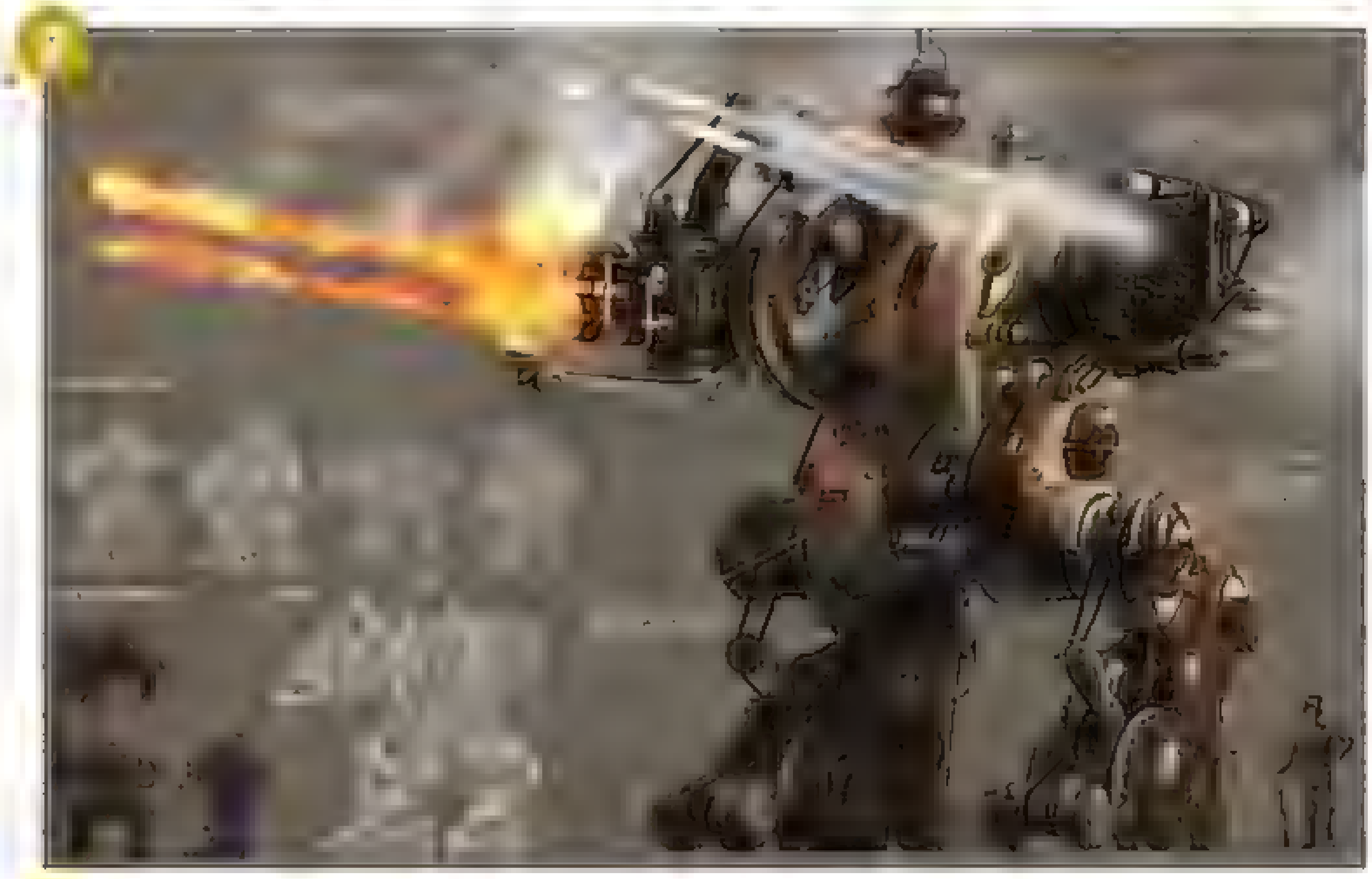
US
markcastanonportfolio.blogspot.com
markmakingdesign@gmail.com
Photoshop

"I consider myself lucky to live and work in a community where there are so many talented artists who share the same passions as I do," says Mark, of working in digital art for a living.

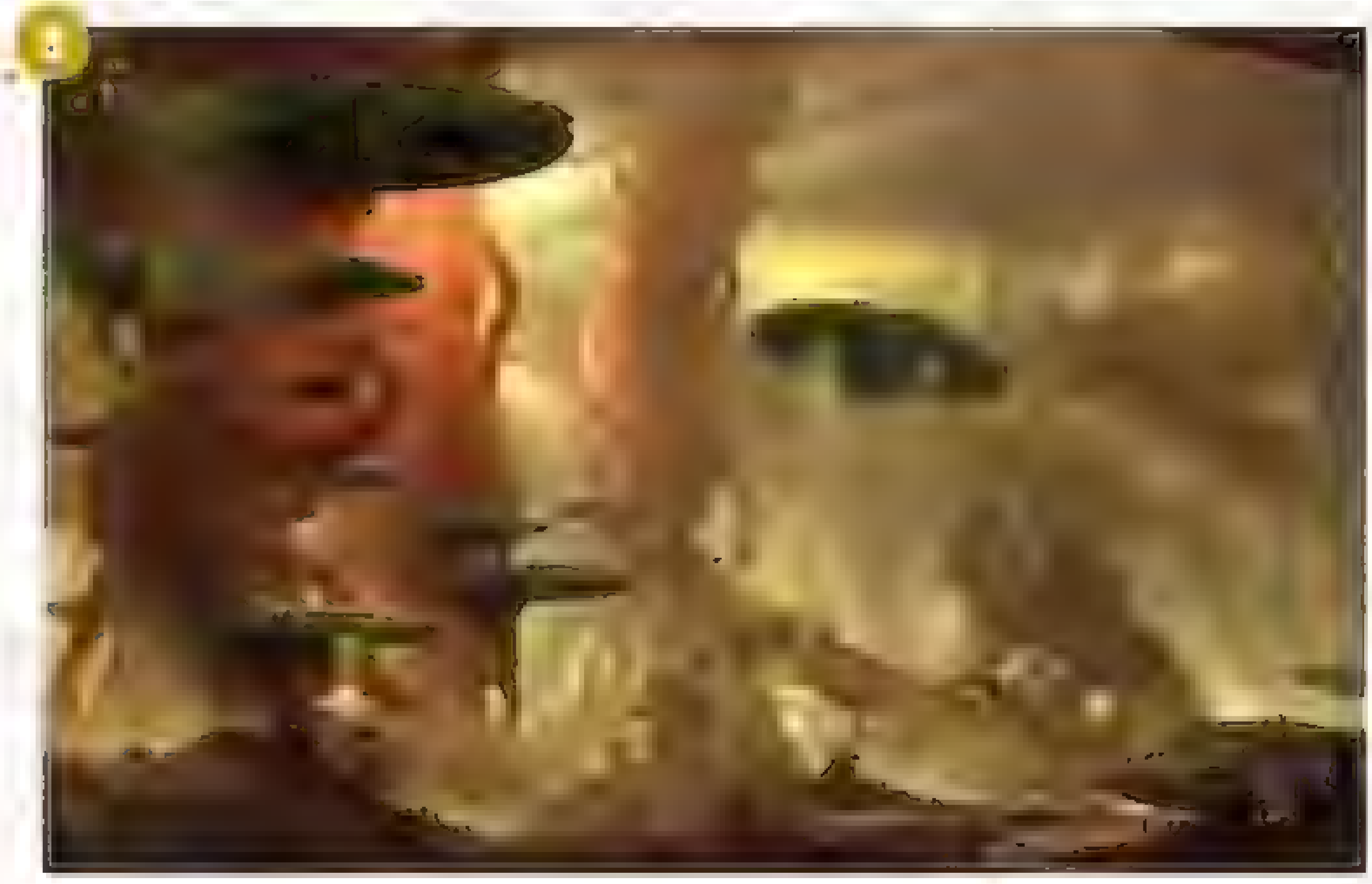
Carrying a passion for the understanding and execution of classical drawing and painting earlier on, Mark admits that his art "was more about observation than imagination". That all changed in 2006 when he started studying at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena. "It turned my creative priorities around," he says. "Although I still landscape paint and figure draw on a regular basis, I've fallen more so in love with concepts in science fiction and fantasy worlds, and the endless boundaries people have set out to discover in their work."



1 NUCLEAR WASTE DEPOT "My favourite genre of sci-fi and fantasy art is the industrial. I am a total nerd for such things as space instruments, construction vehicles, facilities full of machinery, and all other sorts of industrial vehicles and equipment. This piece represents my desire to just get in their and paint up some abstract industrial matter."

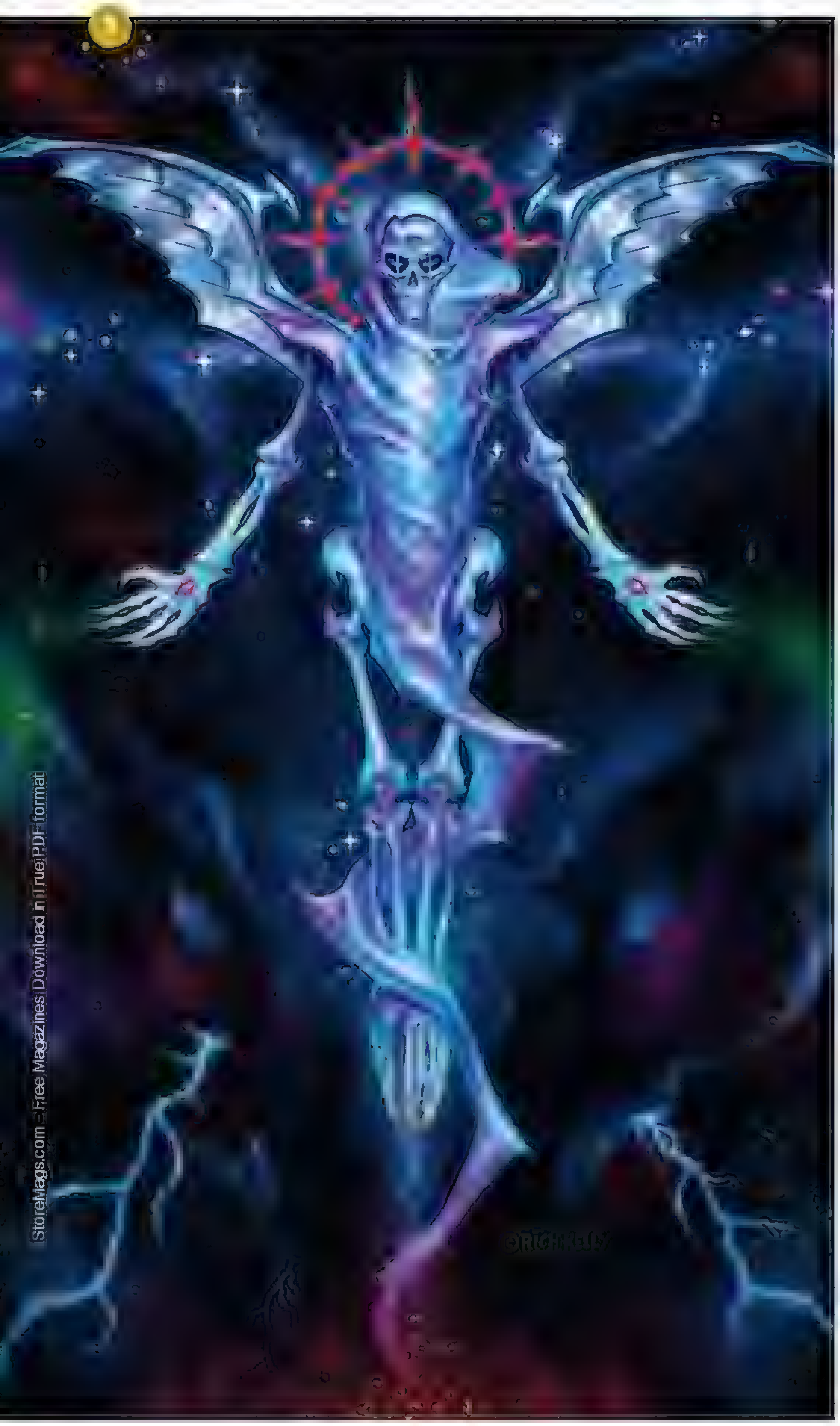


2 SAVE THE MOTHERLAND "I wanted to design a mech, and at the same time I was looking at a lot of wooden Russian architecture. So I challenged myself to put the two together and design something original."



3 POLYPORE "This piece was inspired by birch polypore – those mushroom-like fungi that grow like a spiral staircase up birch trees. I tried to recreate that natural occurrence using sci-fi concepts."

"I've seen some mech designs in my time, but Mark's wooden war machine takes first prize for originality (if not for practicality). Hands up who'd like to see a working scale model?"



Richard Kelly

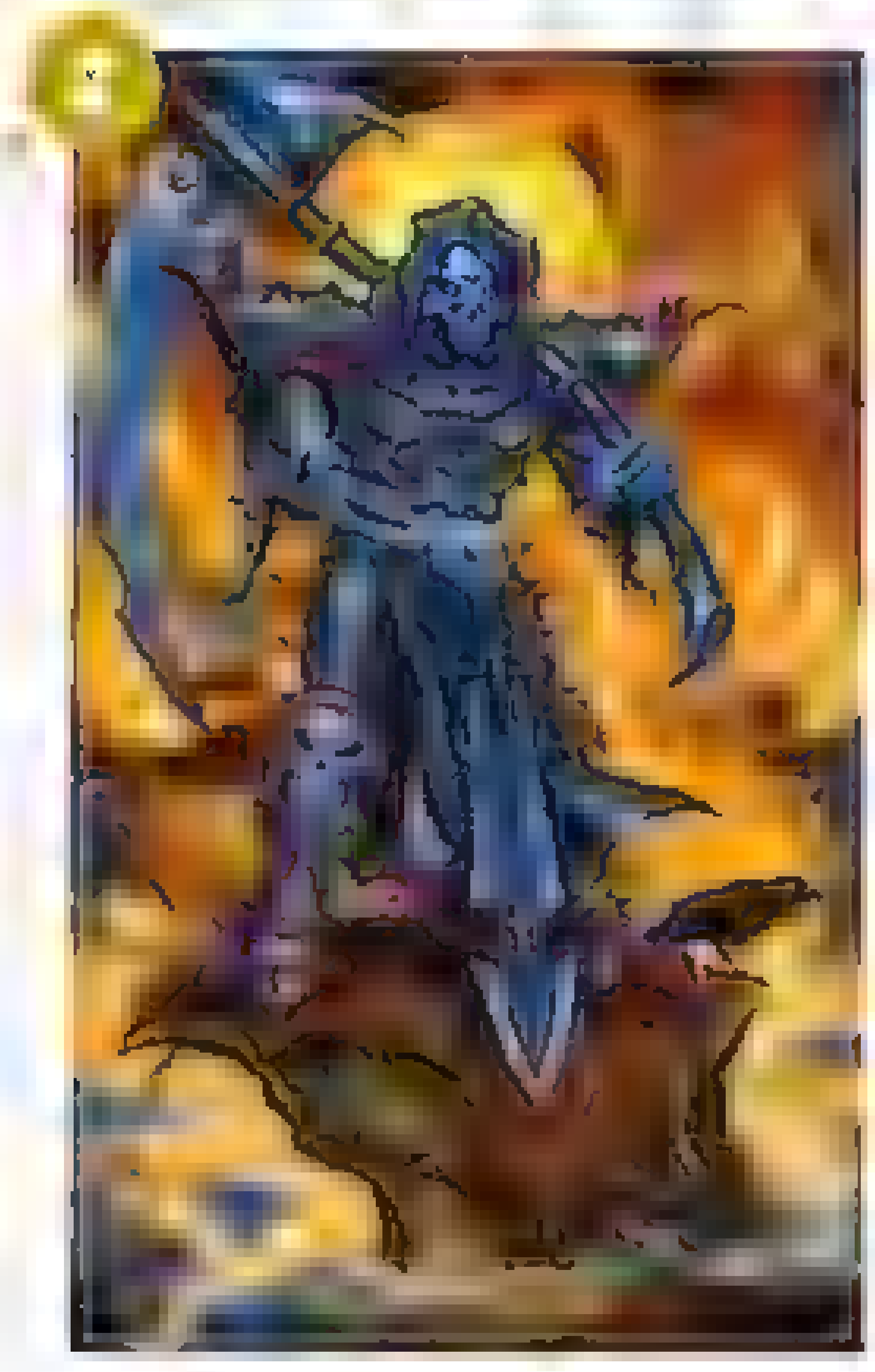
richkellyart.com.istemp.com
rk6342004@yahoo.com
Photoshop

"I remember the work of Frank Frazetta having a big impact on me as a young kid," says Richard. "I'll be starting work on a creator-owned comic project with a supernatural western theme," he continues, "and I'm glad my work is at least professional enough at this point to be included in this rather talented community of artists, and contribute to the conversation in my own little way."

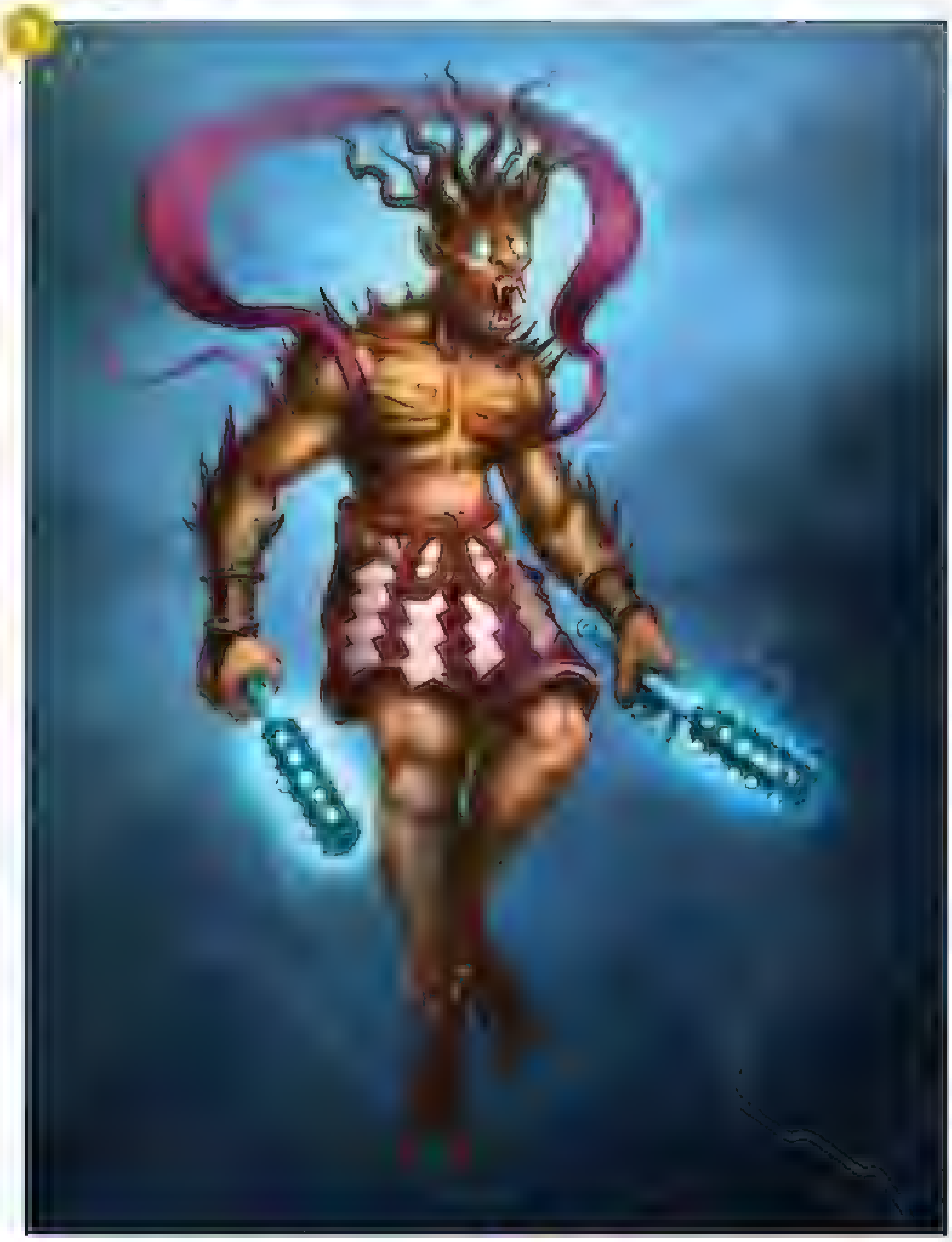
1 **ASCENSION** "Heaven, chaos of the cosmos and rebirth. Not everyone who's eked out a hard-lived life gets the eternal puffy white pink clouds as a reward. Perhaps your time in the afterlife is hard too, with more raw power and energy."

2 **JUDGEMENT** "Keeping with the skeleton theme is a reason – or excuse – to do a reaper figure in battle armour. It's a nod to those big Warcraft designs. My backgrounds are organically painted for the most part. I just start with the basic idea and see where it ends up. Plenty of happy little digital accidents along the way."

"Richard's old-school mix of religious iconography and evil-eyed skeletons rule. Add a humongous sword and scythe, as in Judgement, and you've got my new tattoo design. Now, neck or face… ?"



FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com

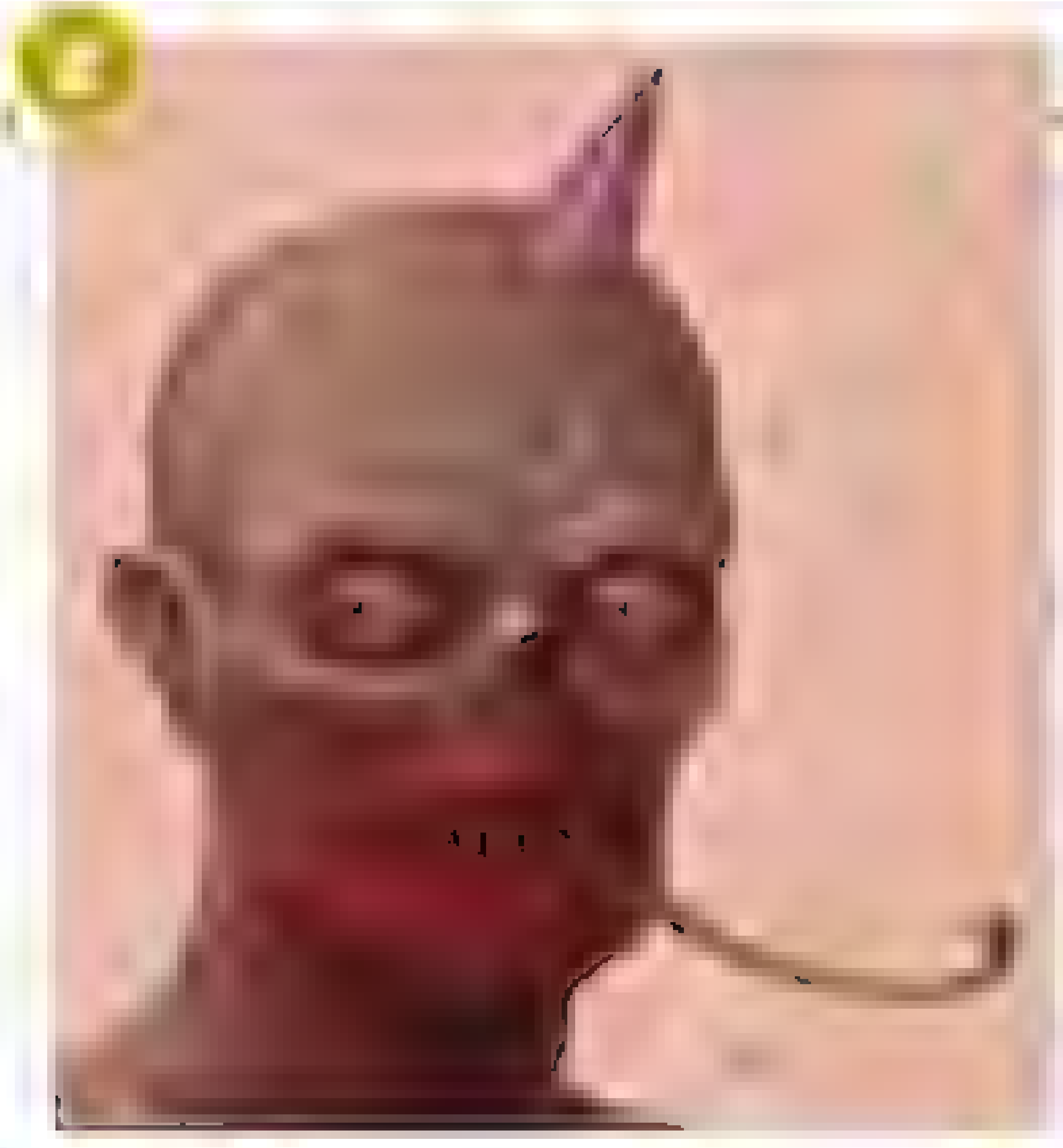


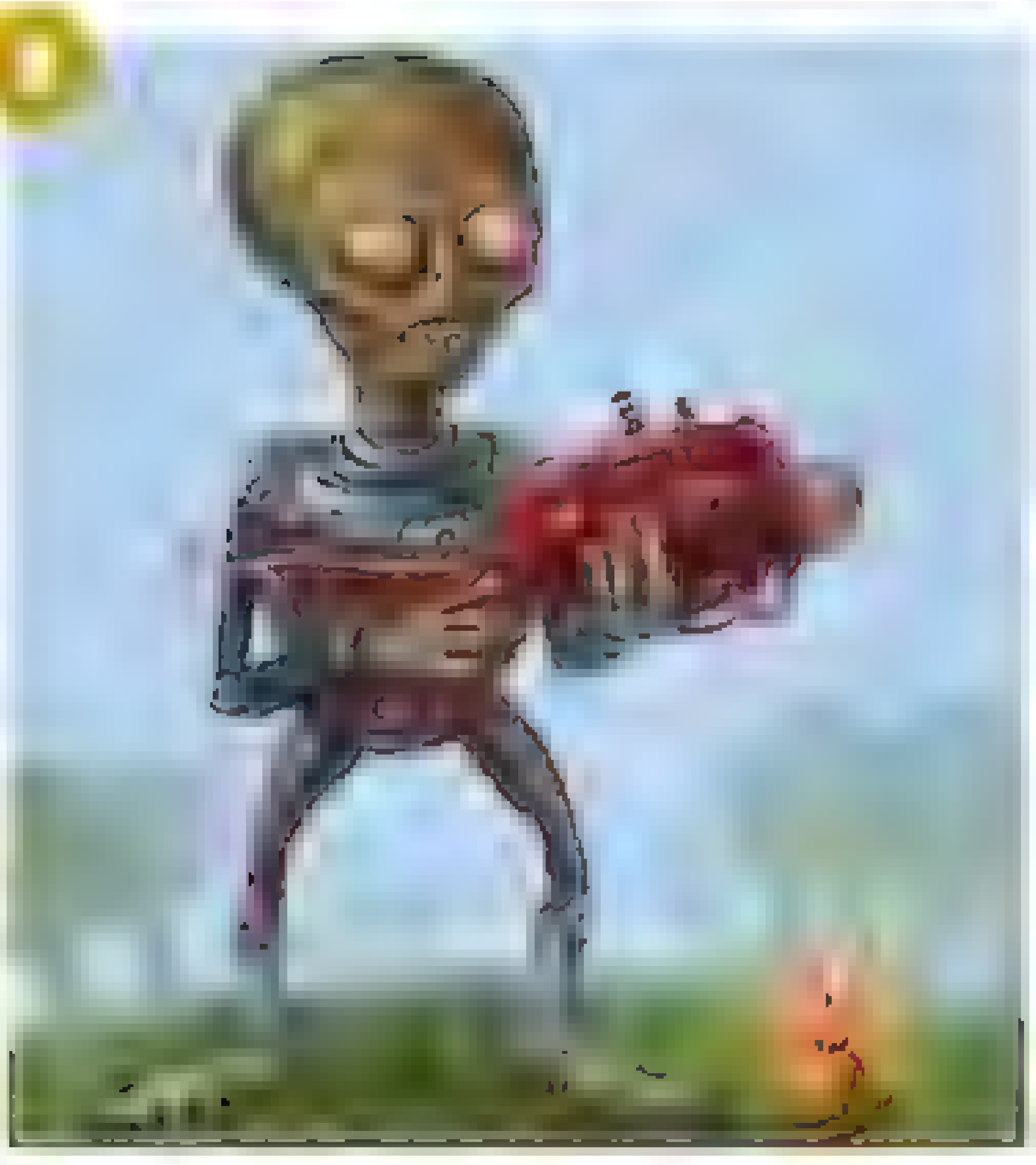
Richard Partridge

LOCATION: England
WEB: partridgeillustration.com
EMAIL: partridgeillustration@googlemail.com
[illegible] Photoshop

"I was the kid always drawing monsters and inventing bizarre ways in which Dr Robotnik could defeat Sonic the Hedgehog," says Richard. "Little did I know that this would lead me down the path of wanting to become a concept artist."

He's just graduated from Bristol's University of the West of England and is now looking to work in games and films. "I love nothing more than to sketch in cafés, watching the world go by as I sit and suck up the coffee."

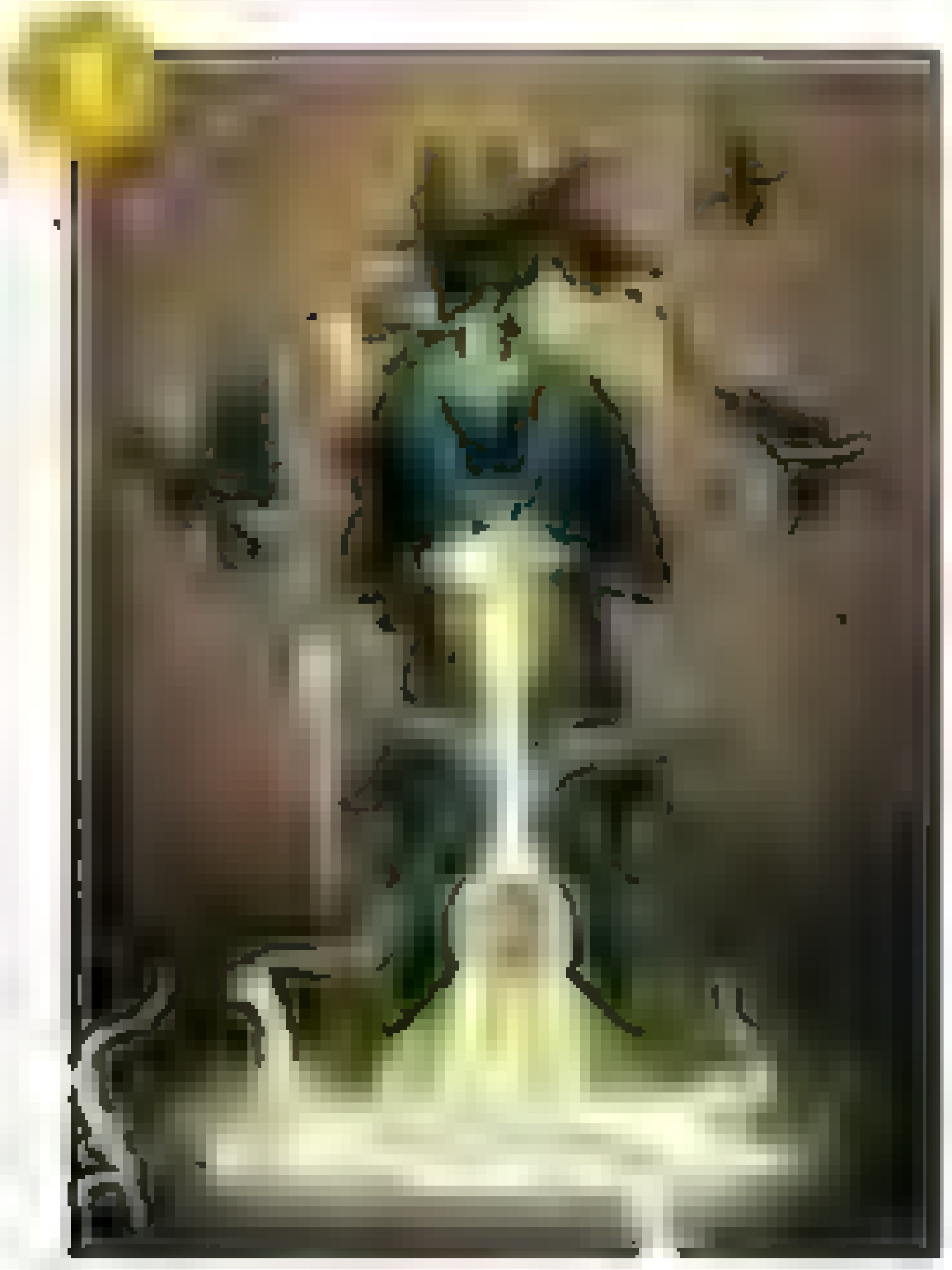


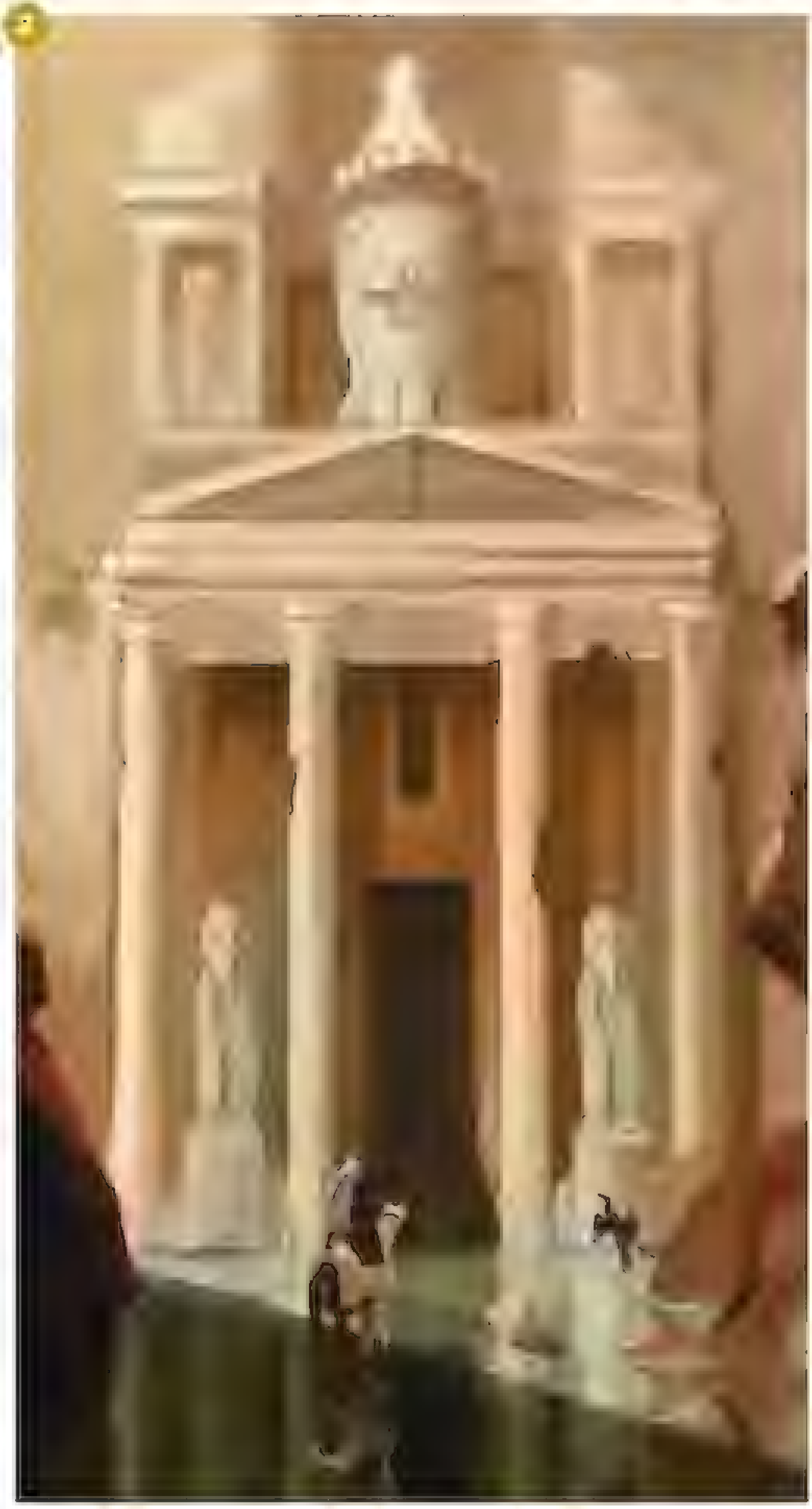


1 **RAIJIN** "This image was created for the Evolve CG competition. The task was to create your own interpretation of a god or legend. I decided to work on the Japanese Shinto God Raijin (sometimes known as Raiden). I strived for cultural authenticity with this design, adding key features such as the sumo belt, oni clubs, prayer beads and the halo-like ribbon."

2 **PARTY ZOMBIE** "I wanted to create a slightly cheesy B-movie image. I paint as if I'm sculpting with clay. I find this method of visualisation helpful when trying to render form."

3 **ALIEN** "With this piece I'd been itching to render an alien head and play around with the specularity on the surface of the skin. The most important part to capture was the personality. It's essential to get the eyes right because they can sometimes make or break a character. It's also fun irradiating innocent wildlife."





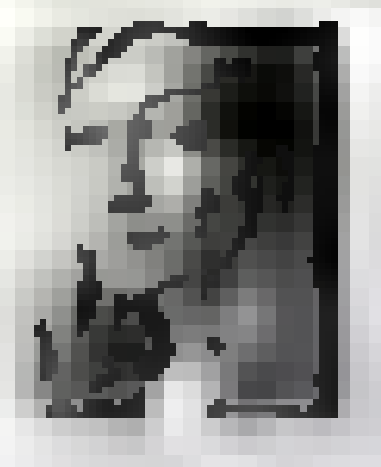
Michael Tomkins

Australia
tomkinsconceptart.viewbook.com
tomkinsart@gmail.com
Photoshop

Growing up in the Blue Mountains near Sydney, Michael liked nothing more that drawing fan art based on the worlds of StarCraft and Warcraft. "I started out digitally two years ago after finding ConceptArt.org and travelling to New Zealand for the inspirational Marama workshop they put on," he says. "I started out in the games industry as an environment artist and have recently started freelancing."

DREAM GUIDE "This is a concept for a spirit guide who's active during dreams. I wanted it to have a mixture of nightmarish and pleasant elements representing the two extremes of the mind when we dream. I moved the colour temperature down the figure to lead the eye between the two types of dream minions."

ENTRY TO AL KHAZNEH "This painting is based on the ancient Jordanian city of Petra. An explorer has reached the flooded valley, unaware of what awaits him inside."



"There's an admirable clarity to Michael's concept paintings that ensures the viewer immediately understand the ideas he's trying to convey, a skill highlighted by his application of light and control over his colour."

Reader

FXPosé

Tyson Murphy

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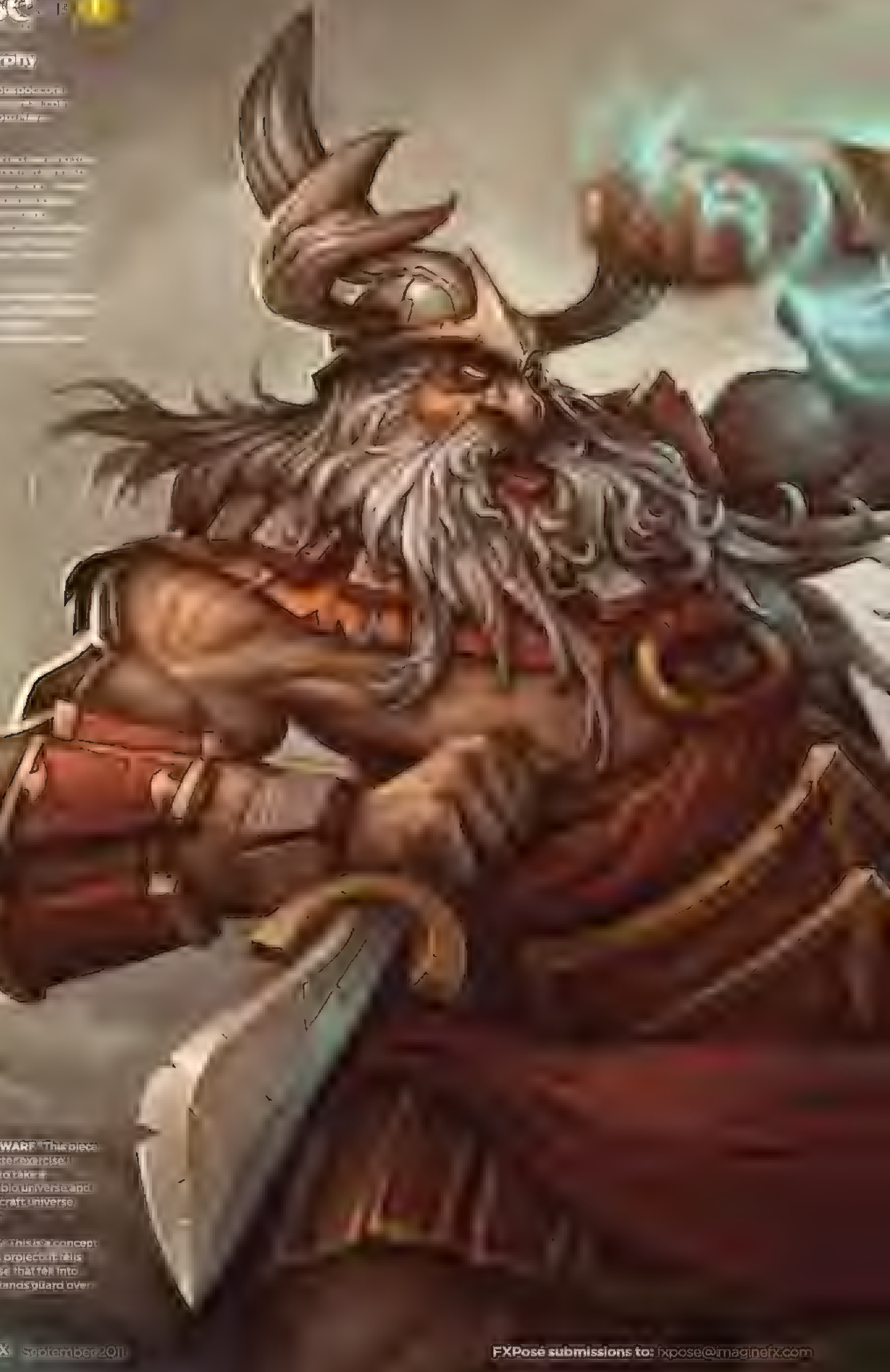


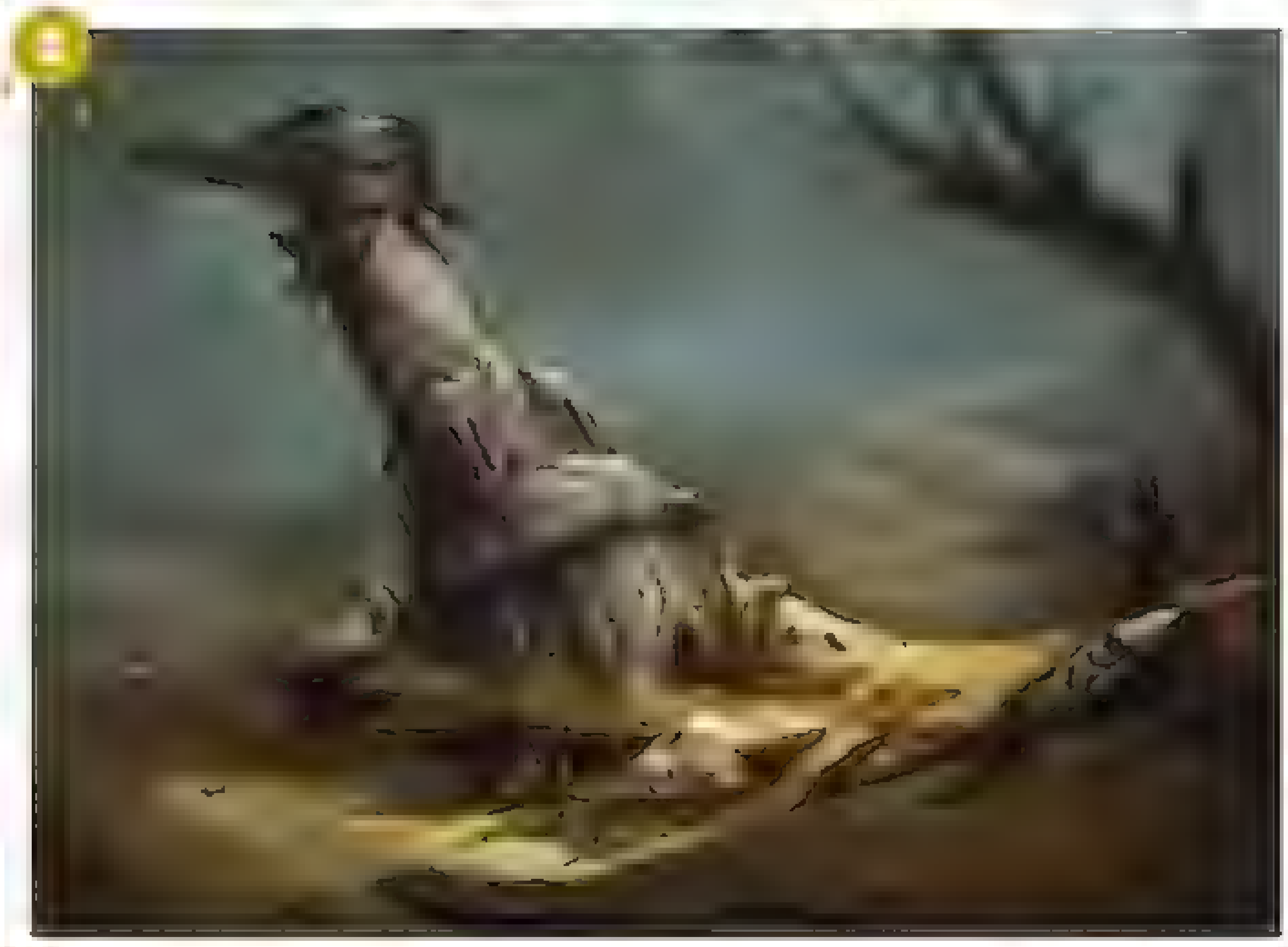
1 **THE BARBARIAN DWARF** "This piece was simply a character exercise I gave myself. I wanted to take a character from the Diablo universe and cram him into the Warcraft universe. This is what came out."

2 **THE LIGHTHOUSE** "This is a concept I did for a personal project. It tells the story of a lighthouse that fell into ruin years ago. It still stands guard over the dry ocean bed."

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"What stands out for me in both pieces is Tyson's understanding and use of light. From observational touches like the reflected blue light in The Barbarian Dwarf, through to the pool of light used in The Lighthouse to focus the viewer's attention on the entrance – clever stuff."

Paul Tysall,
[illegible]



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Want to see your digital art grace these very pages? Send your work to us, along with an explanation of your techniques, the title of each piece of art, a photo of yourself and your contact details. Images should be sent as 300dpi JPEG files, on CD or DVD. All artwork is submitted on the basis of a non-exclusive worldwide licence to publish, both in print and electronically.

You can also email submissions for FXPosé. Bear in mind that files must be no more than 5MB in total, or we won't receive them.
fxpose@imaginefx.com

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UK

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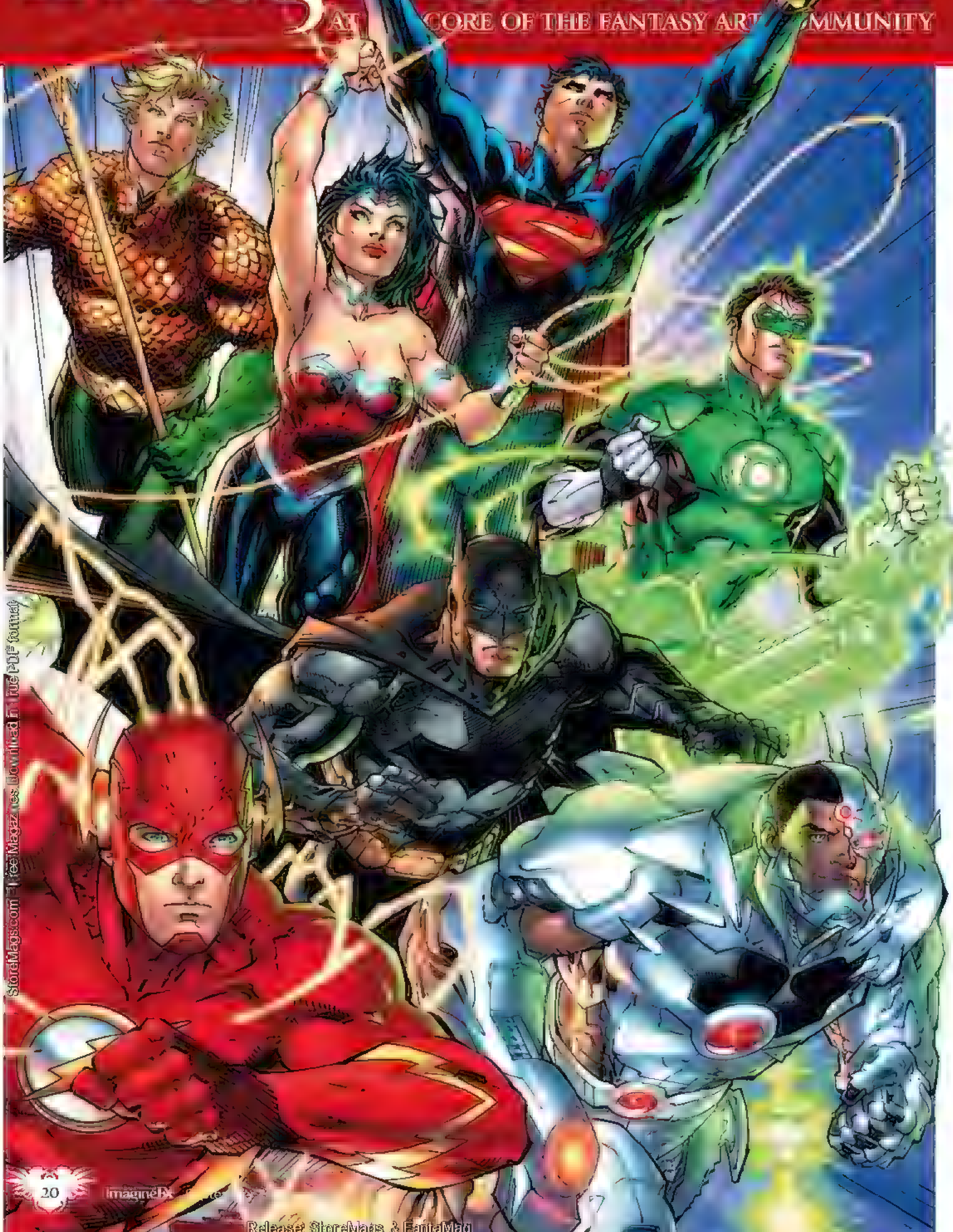
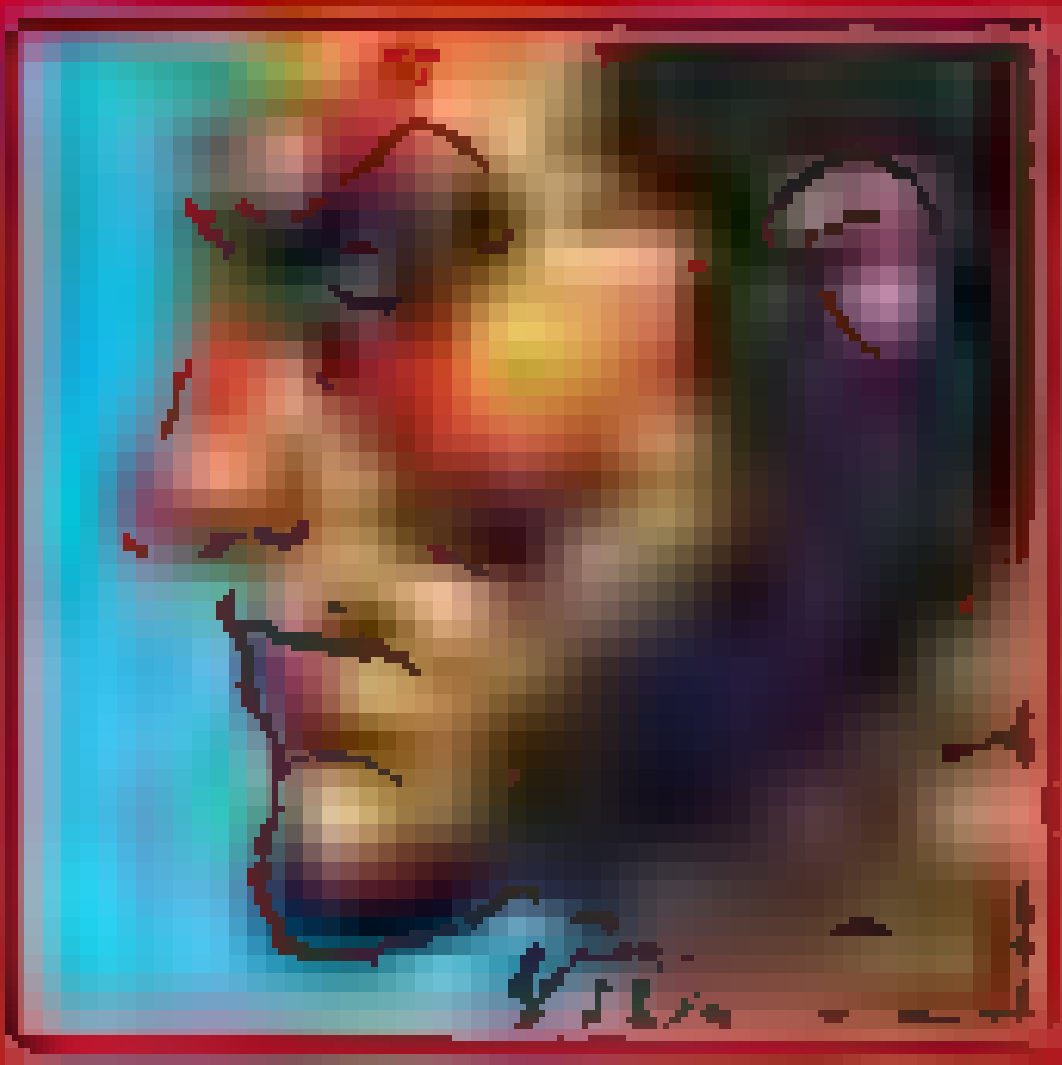


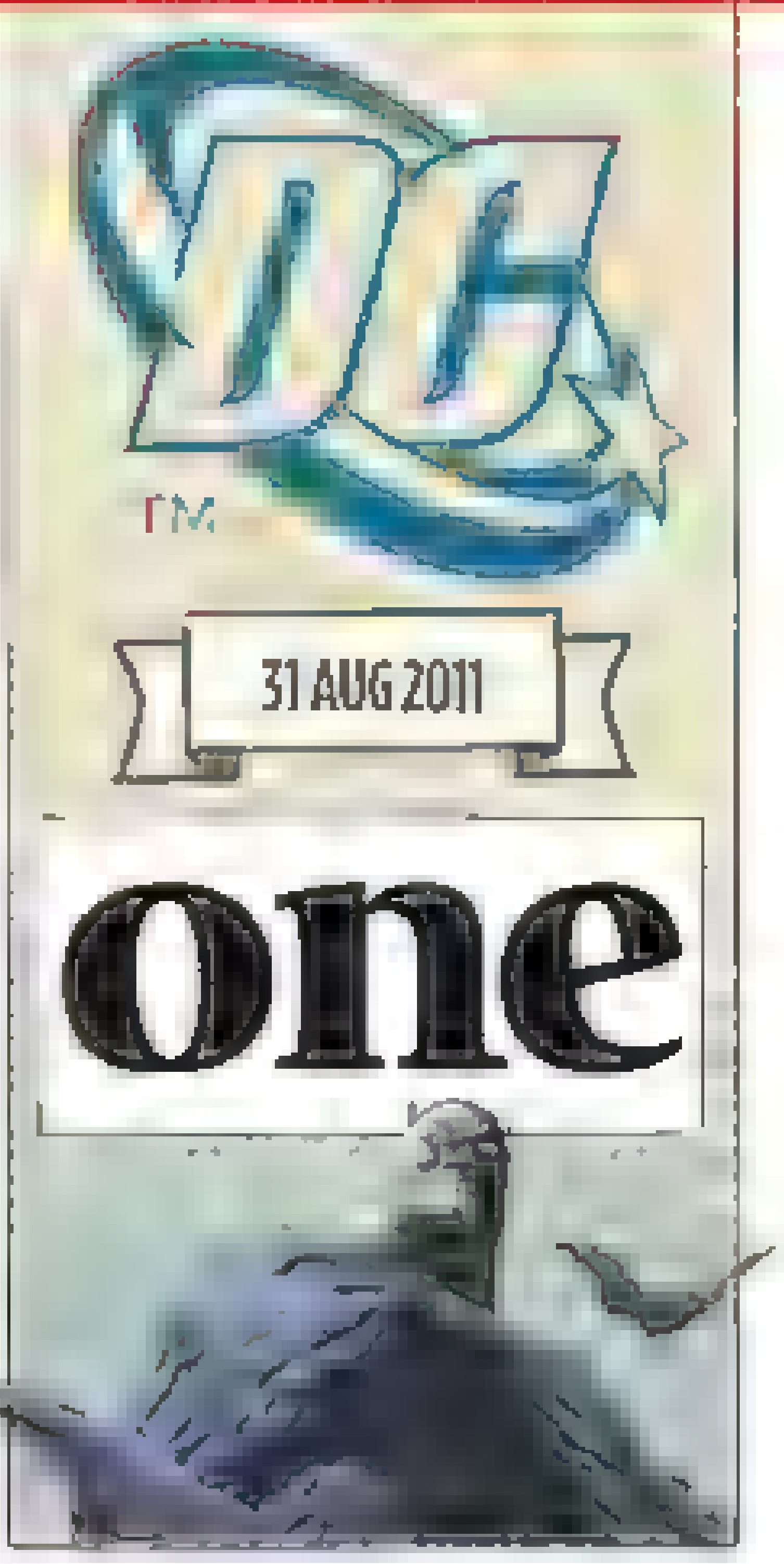


FAST AND FURIOUS
Simon Bisley's career-defining take on Sláine is going Stateside. The artist tells us about his work on the project and also reveals what he thinks about it now
Page 23

COMICS RELIEF
Digital artists get together to work on the Spirit of Hope anthology, raising funds for the survivors of the Japan and New Zealand disasters
Page 26

BOTH BARRELS
Thomas Hodge is on a one-man mission to update the film poster for the digital age. Even if it's largely for passion rather than a pay cheque
Page 28

DC's most powerful group of heroes is Justice League, which will be the first title to be reinvented. The brand new issue will feature DC's new-style artwork pencilled by Jim Lee himself



Going for number one

Stop! Rewind! DC hopes to reinvigorate comics as the company restarts 52 titles with new stories, new artwork and simultaneous digital and print release dates

On 31 August, DC Comics will release Justice League issue one. 'But wait,' comic fans call out. 'Didn't Justice League start in 1960? Surely it should be something like issue 612 if it comes out monthly?'

Not any more. DC is restarting 52 of its superhero comics at number one, as the rest of the range follows Justice League into the new universe in September. With the reboot, DC will up its digital cred by releasing comics in shops and on their app platform simultaneously, ditching the old print-first, digital-later approach.

> 66 Characters including Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman and Aquaman are being extensively reworked 99

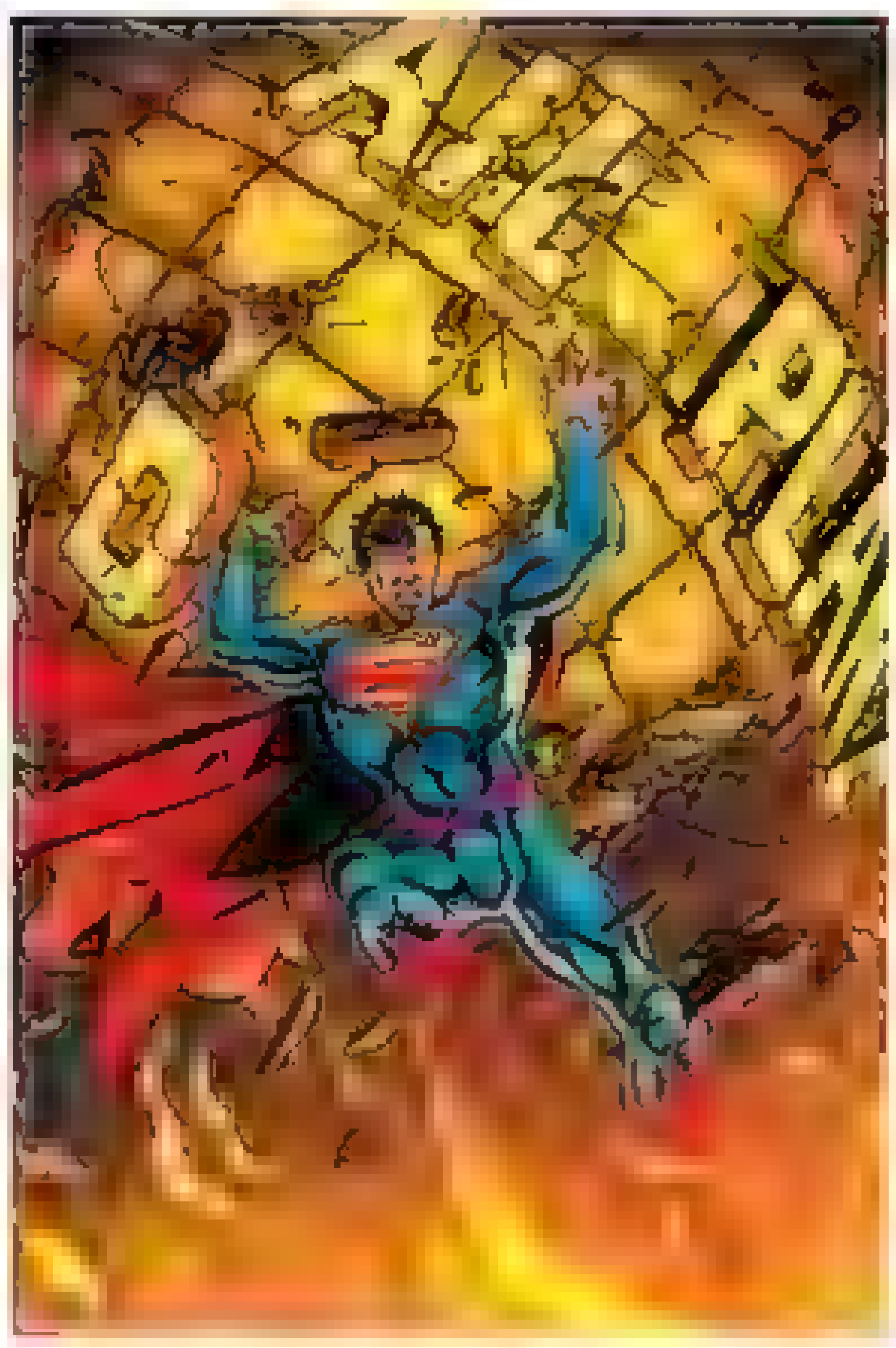
The response has been mixed. "It's just an attempt to keep the dollars coming in. It won't do the product any favours," says ImagineFX reader Paul Mullins. "This is the most daredevil thing ever done by a comic company, but I do believe it will totally pay off," counters Melvin Davis.

It may well pay off, if the hard work of DC artists is anything to go by. Characters including Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman and Aquaman are being extensively reworked in terms of their costumes, the universe and how their stories are told.

"We're trying to recapture the excitement of what comics used to be. Comics in recent years have been [illegible] more [illegible]," says

co-publisher and artist Jim Lee. "We used to hold this special ground in entertainment where we could do things in comics that you couldn't see in movies and TV programmes."

Alterations to Superman might be what most people [illegible] because he's DC's most iconic character. However, as the Justice League artist, he's been making the costumes of the key heroes more contemporary and team-like. Some will have higher collars and more p[illegible] »



The cover of the new issue one of Superman by George Pérez. DC is revamping layouts across the 52 titles being relaunched. It will be interesting to see how the mastheads evolve too

KIERON GILLEN

The writer of Uncanny X-Men explains its demise

The X-Men's Schism storyline is cited as the reason Uncanny X-Men will end. A bit drastic?
It's a statement of seriousness. The schism is so severe, the Uncanny X-Men simply can't continue in the form they were. This is a real rupturing of belief in the X-Men. That it's big enough to bring the book to a halt says everything.

Is it naive to think this makes space for a new X-Men title or a relaunch, like DC are doing?
Uncanny has been planned a long time and the timing with the DC announcement is a little unfortunate. Schism is the next step in the multi-year plan for the whole X Universe. It moves to its own master, and isn't really about aligning the X-Men franchise across multiple media. If that was the aim, splitting the X-Men in half isn't the way I'd be going.

Give us your opinion on the DC reboot. Will it work?
Predictions are beside the point. It's a big thing, and we'll know in six months how it turns out. It could work great. It could be a complete disaster. But let's wait and see. In the long term the bigger news is the day-and-date digital. Relaunching your entire line is a big thing, but in a year's time a 'comics are coming out day' will be the new status quo.

What's your take on how stories, characters and artwork are evolving in a digital age?
Print is reforming. While it's hurting as a pop-cheap medium, it's booming as a deluxe object and I could see that continuing. Comics such as FreakAngels, the Ellis Duffield webcomic, are free online, while their print edition gets ever more bespoke and beautiful

Kieron is the writer of Uncanny X-Men and has also written Generation Hope, Thor and Dark Avengers: Ares.

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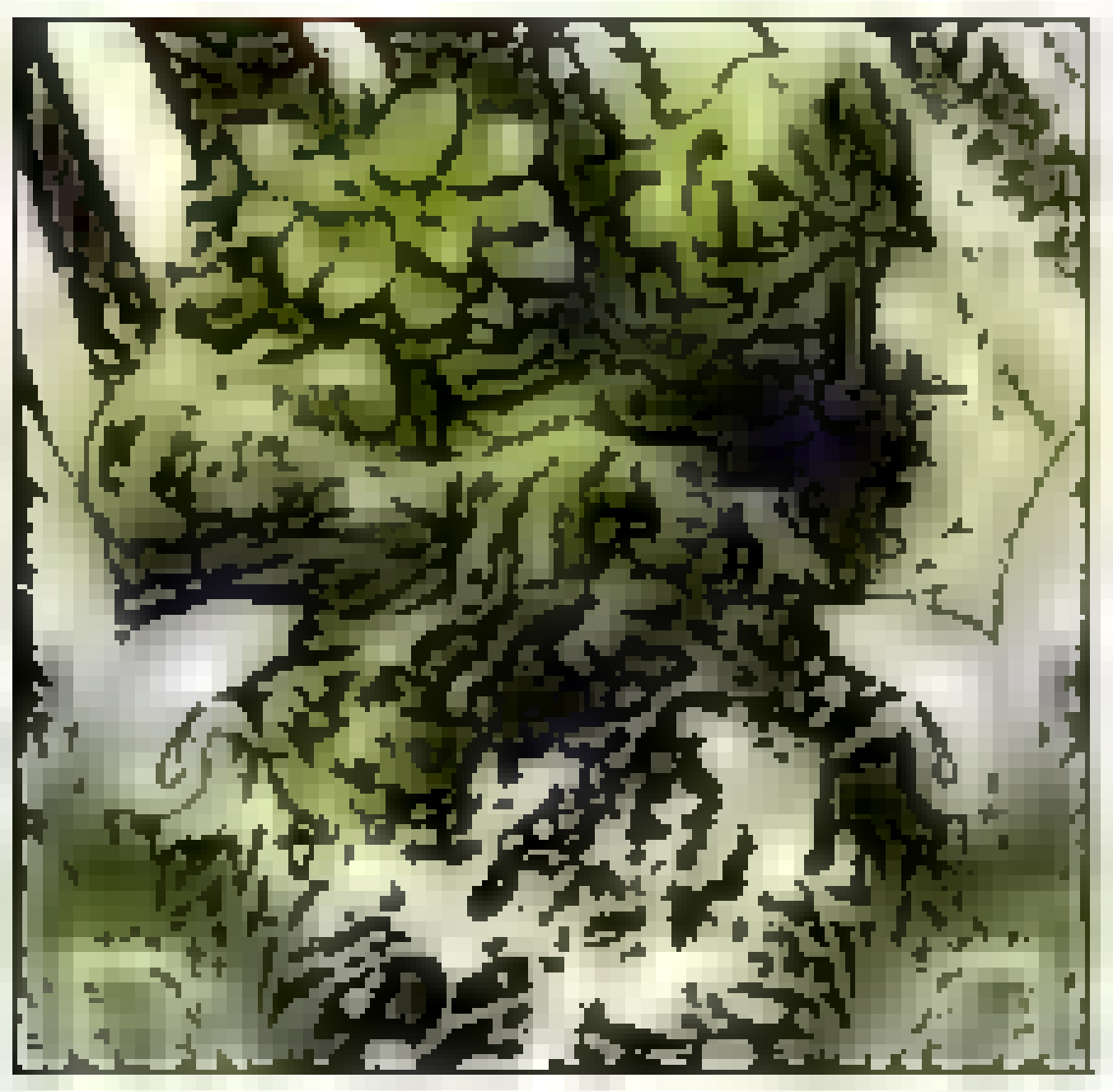


Because of his primordial nature Swamp Thing will remain pretty much the same

as real-world matters are drawn. Batman's armour plating may become more obvious because Gotham's Dark Knight has no super powers that he can call upon.

More esoteric characters such as Swamp Thing might not change very much. Co-publisher Dan DiDio says:

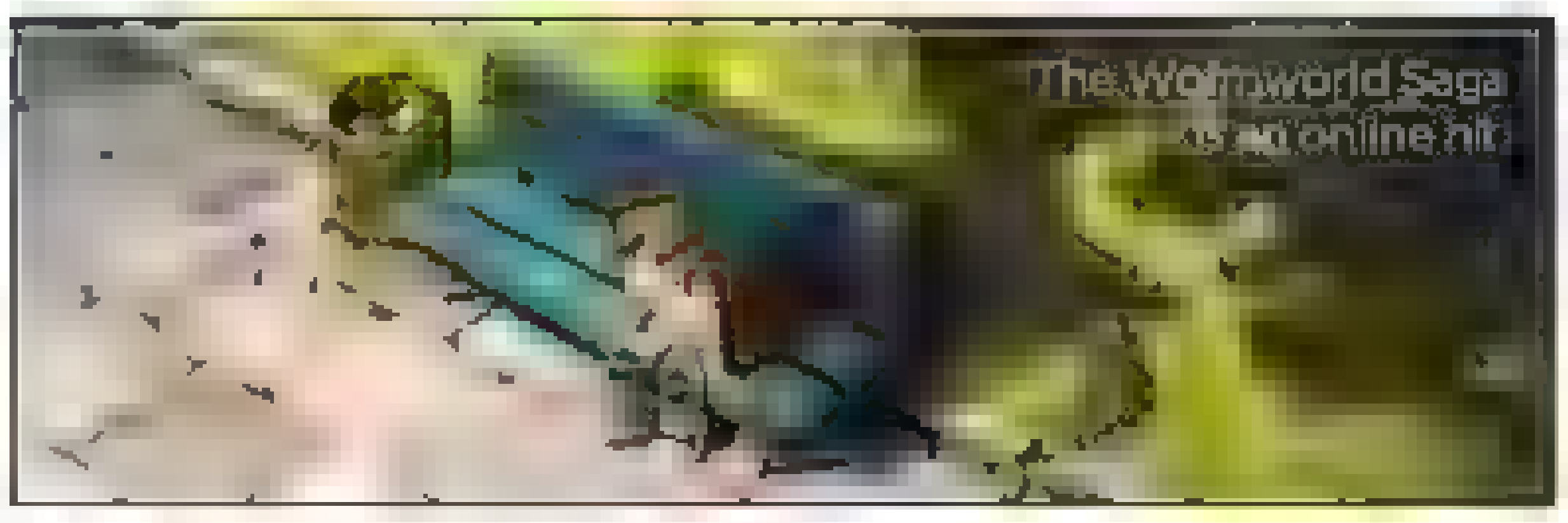
"He has a defined look in regards to how he mixes with the environment, so a lot of the aspects of Swamp Thing will be very much in place, although there might be a misplaced flower or a tuber or two.

"[illegible] has been working closely with artists on layouts, getting them more closely involved with the stories. [illegible] more writer-focused these days and more input from those who draw them is a big part of the reboot."

Of course, twisting plots and renumberings are nothing new in comic publishing. Marvel recently announced the death of Peter Parker in Ultimate Spider-Man and the [illegible] X-Men series is to end with issue 544 in October. Fans expect replacement Spider-Man and X-Men books to appear.

But is DC [illegible] a roll of the dice? [illegible] would debate using the phrase 'roll of the dice' [illegible]: "It's a very informed bet, in that these kinds of relaunches have been done in the past – they just haven't been done on this sort of scale. It's unprecedented to do it across 52 books, but it's DC's history to always update their characters."

To find out more visit **dccomics.com/dcu**



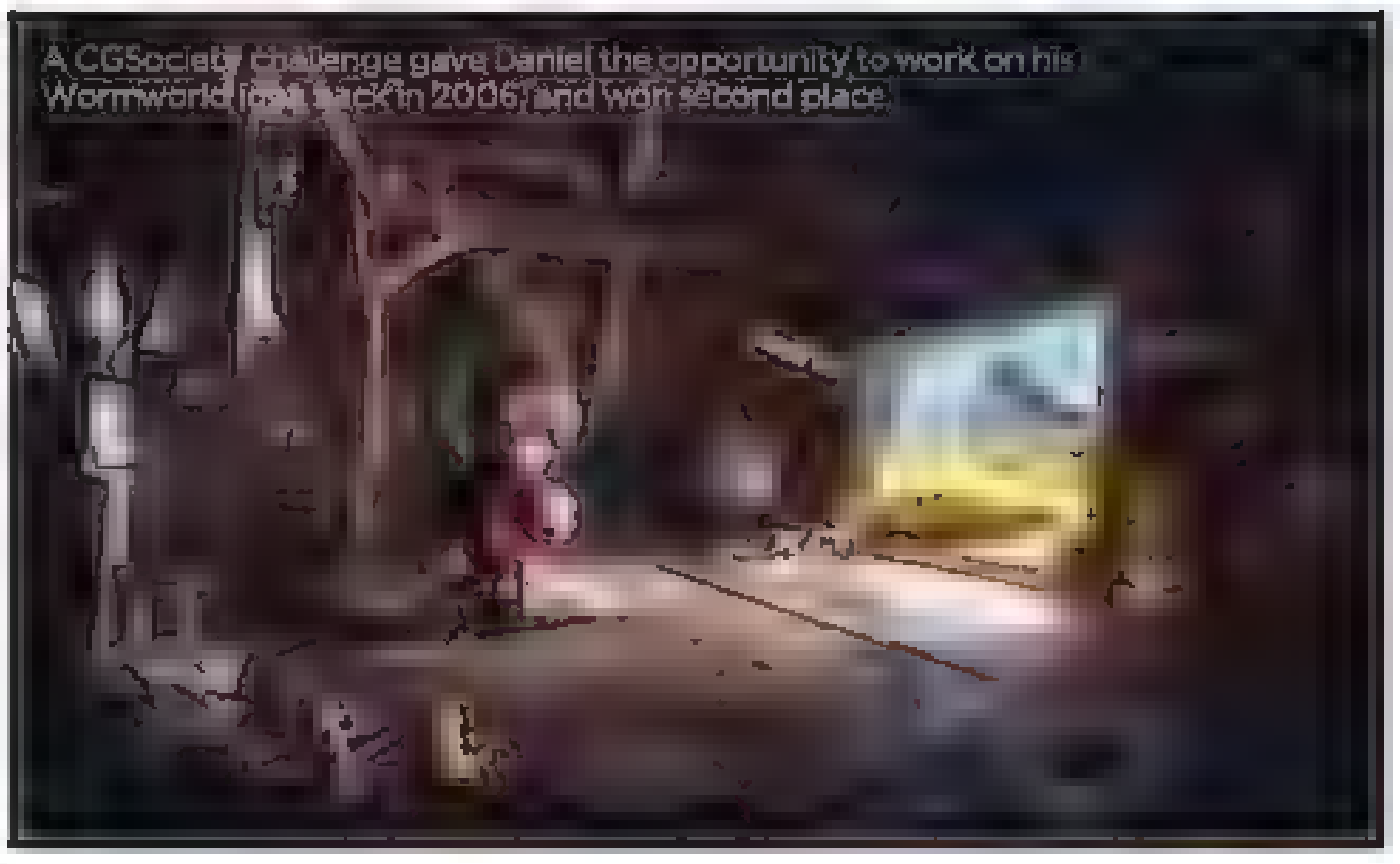
The Wormworld Saga is an online hit

Wormworld wriggles free

Persistence pays Digital artist Daniel Lieske has come up with his own online graphic novel and app

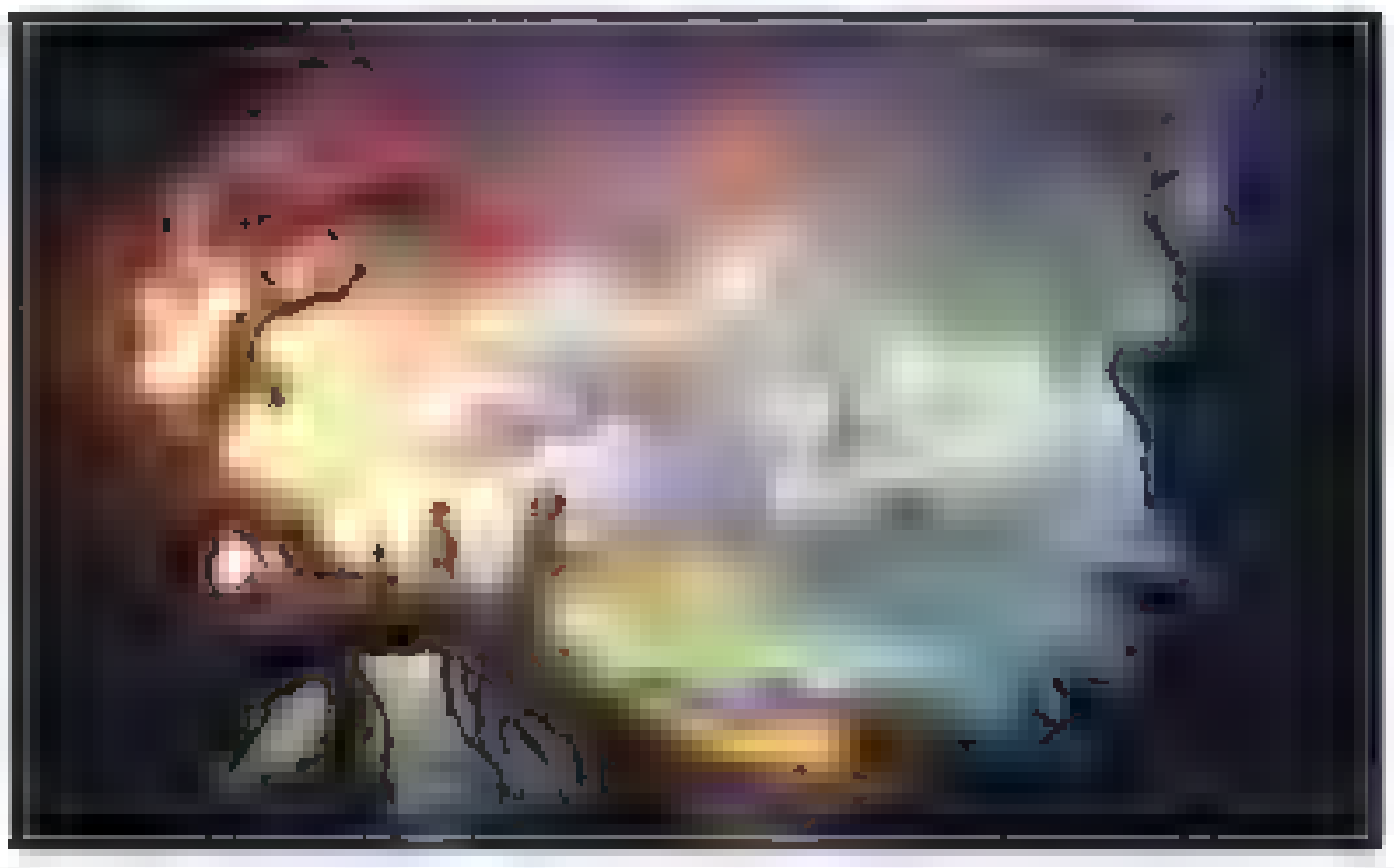
As a child, German artist Daniel Lieske used to sell his homemade comic books in the schoolyard. Now his dream to become a renowned comic artist is becoming a reality thanks The Wormworld Saga, his massively successful online graphic novel launched six months ago.

"I've recently decided to quit my job and concentrate fully on The Wormworld Saga," he says. "I'm working on the second chapter, which I now hope to release way before the end of the year."



A CGSociety challenge gave Daniel the opportunity to work on his Wormworld idea back in 2006, and won second place.

The online version of Wormworld is free. The artwork is presented so that all you have to do is scroll down and read.



In Daniel's lovingly illustrated Wormworld Saga, a young daydreamer enters a mysterious fantasy world

Over 600 000 people have read the first chapter, and eight more are planned. Raising money via Kickstarter.com, Daniel now has the cash to create a Wormworld app, which he hopes to sell. This will be a deluxe version of the comic with a making-of the artwork, author's commentary and the opportunity to add new chapters when they arrive.

"The app will be the ideal way for readers to enjoy the Wormworld Saga, to get access to exclusive content and support my work with a small amount of money," he adds.

Learn more about Daniel's work at **wormworldsaga.com**.

Fast and furious

Heroes of yore Simon Bisley's signature creation Sláine is going Stateside!

For many comic fans, Simon Bisley's interpretation of 2000 AD's Irish warrior character Sláine Macroth ranks as his best work, and 21 years after rejuvenating the title, Sláine: The Horned God is getting its first hardback US release.

But does the artist really think it's his best work? "I have no idea [illegible]," he says. "I appreciate that people like it, but I see all the faults in it – all the bad anatomy and bits that I rushed here and there. So I'm more critical of it than anything."

Modesty aside, Simon's work on Sláine showcases the artist's style at its most explosive and provides one of those moments in comics when story, provided by Pat Mills, and art come together to offer something unique.

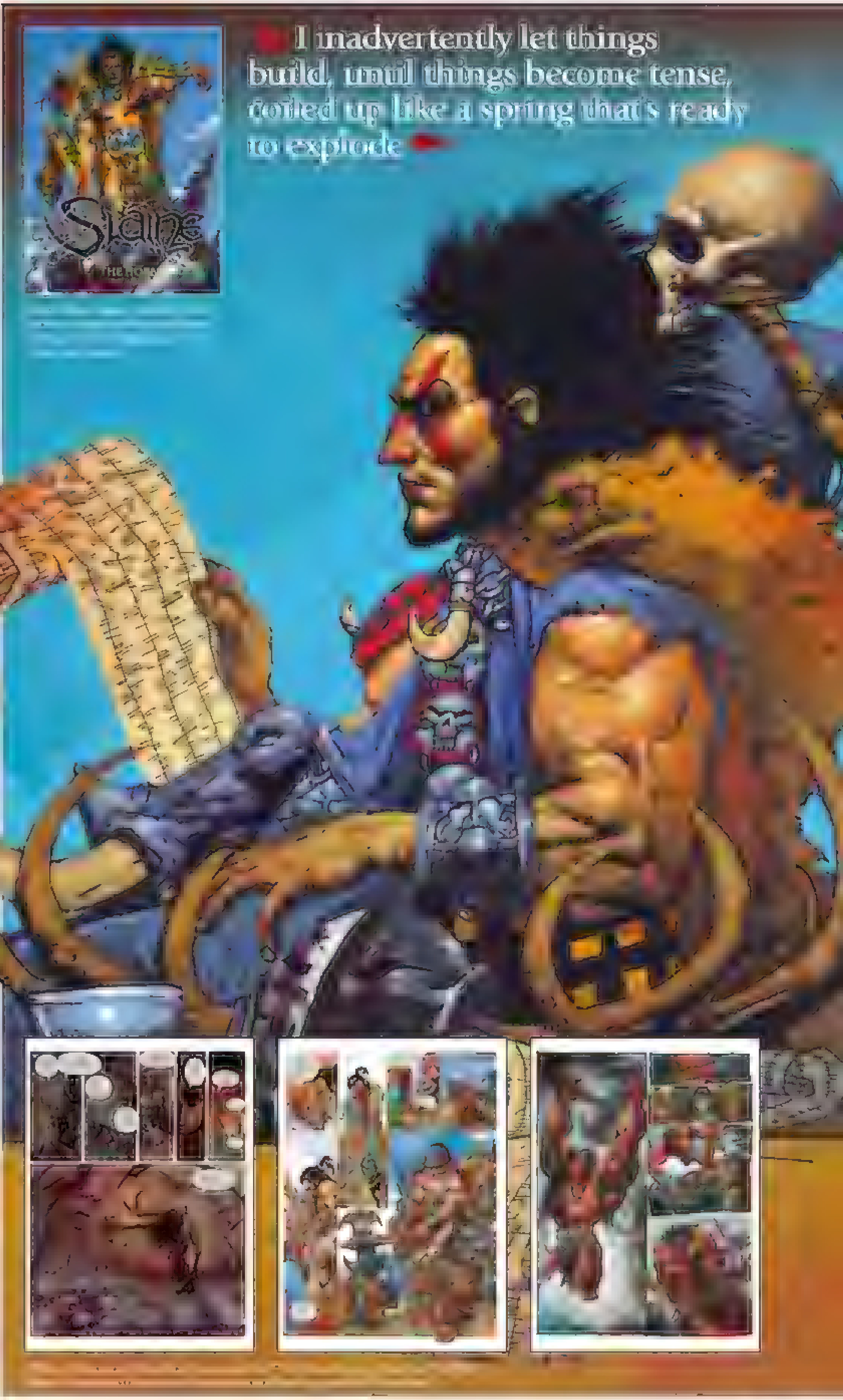
Simon agrees that his burgeoning style at the time was a perfect fit for the Irish warrior. "It just appeared. It was a bit off the cuff. It just came to me without any thought. The [illegible] of the iconic first cover of Sláine – I did that pretty much instantaneously on the day. Two, three minutes – I just painted it."

Comic artists may try to replicate Simon's tumultuous approach to his art, but it shouldn't be attempted unless you know what you're doing. "I inadvertently let things build, until things become tense, coiled up like a spring ready to explode." This approach enabled the artist to tap into his subconscious for the first inspiration. "The initial lines are the most important thing. That's where all the power comes from. The rest is just paraphernalia and ornamentation."

Simon claims that he was just finding his feet at the time of Sláine. "It was a funny process, because I was only just learning to paint, certainly as far as comic strips go. So yeah, my approach was furious. Furious and quick, and it's about the emotion of it."

Now that Sláine has a US hardcover release, Simon will be waiting for the call from the studios. "I used to think that if a film ever happened I'd play Sláine, but as time went by I thought I'd be his father," he says. "Now I think it'd best be done by some hardcore [illegible] actor or a [illegible] drunk. And I'd be the grandad or the old woman."

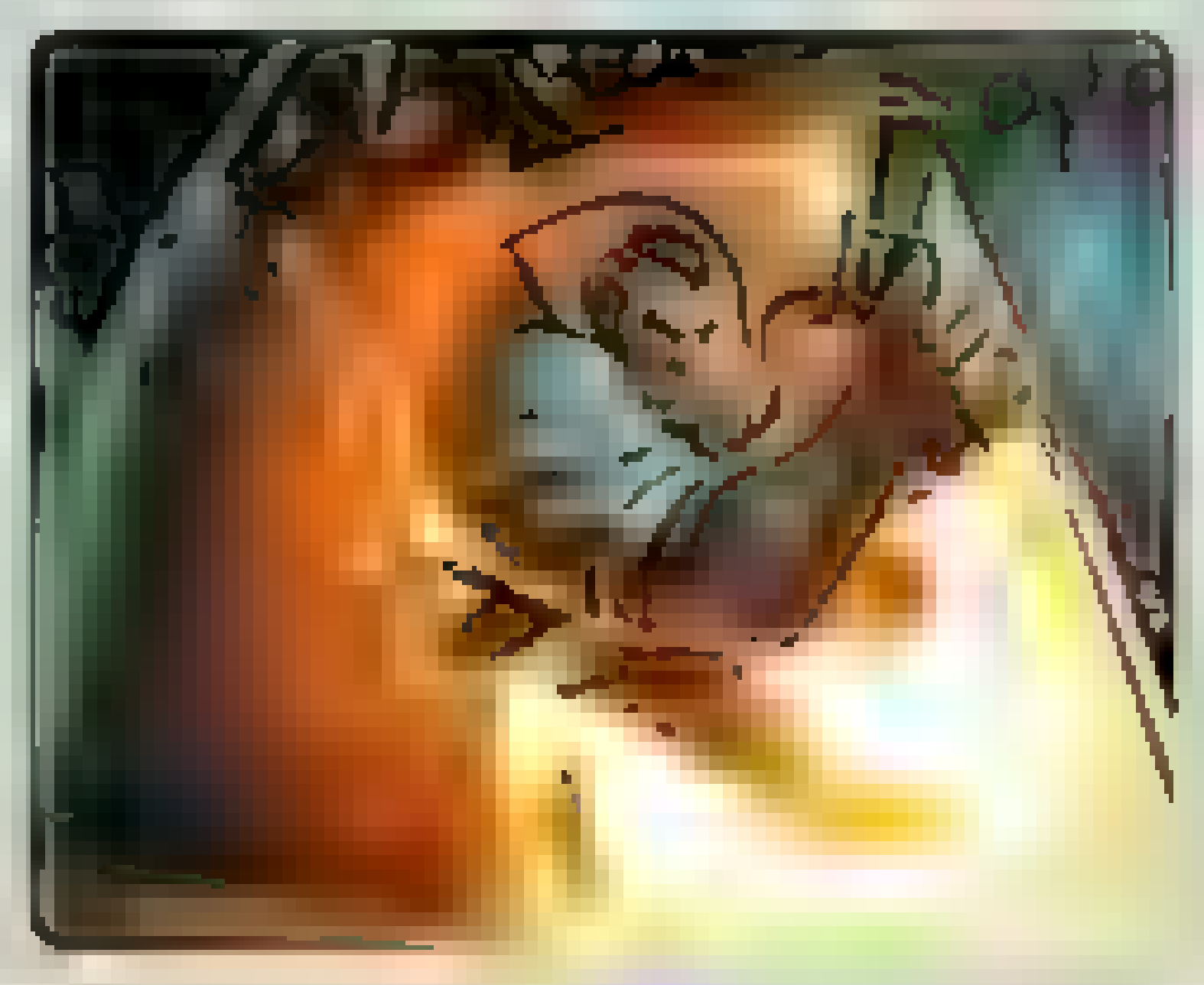
Have a look at what Simon's up to now **simonbisleygallery.com**



"I inadvertently let things build, until things become tense, coiled up like a spring that's ready to explode" dev. content

+deviantWATCH

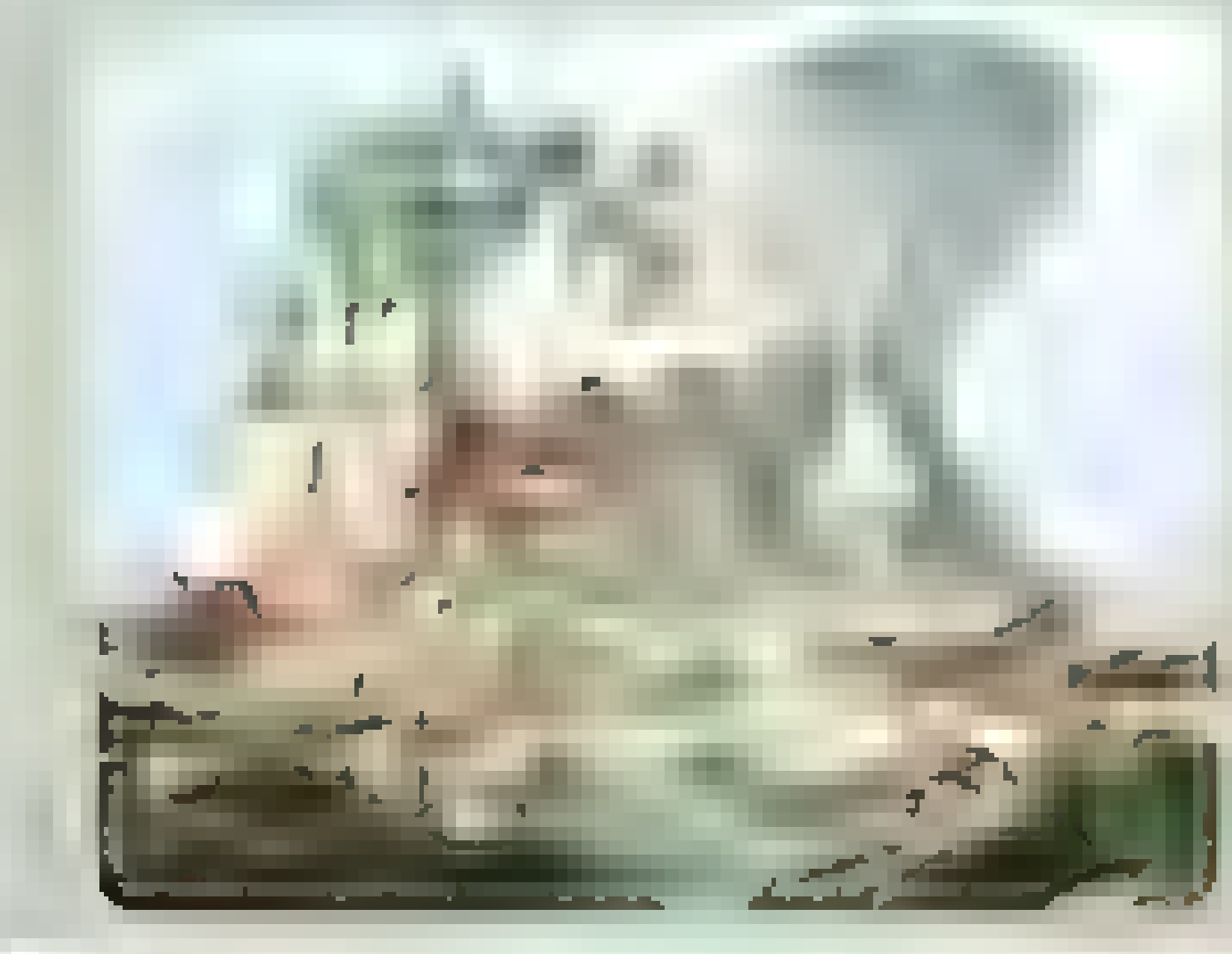
Here are some of the many gems we found on the pages of deviantART. .



Njay

njay.deviantart.com

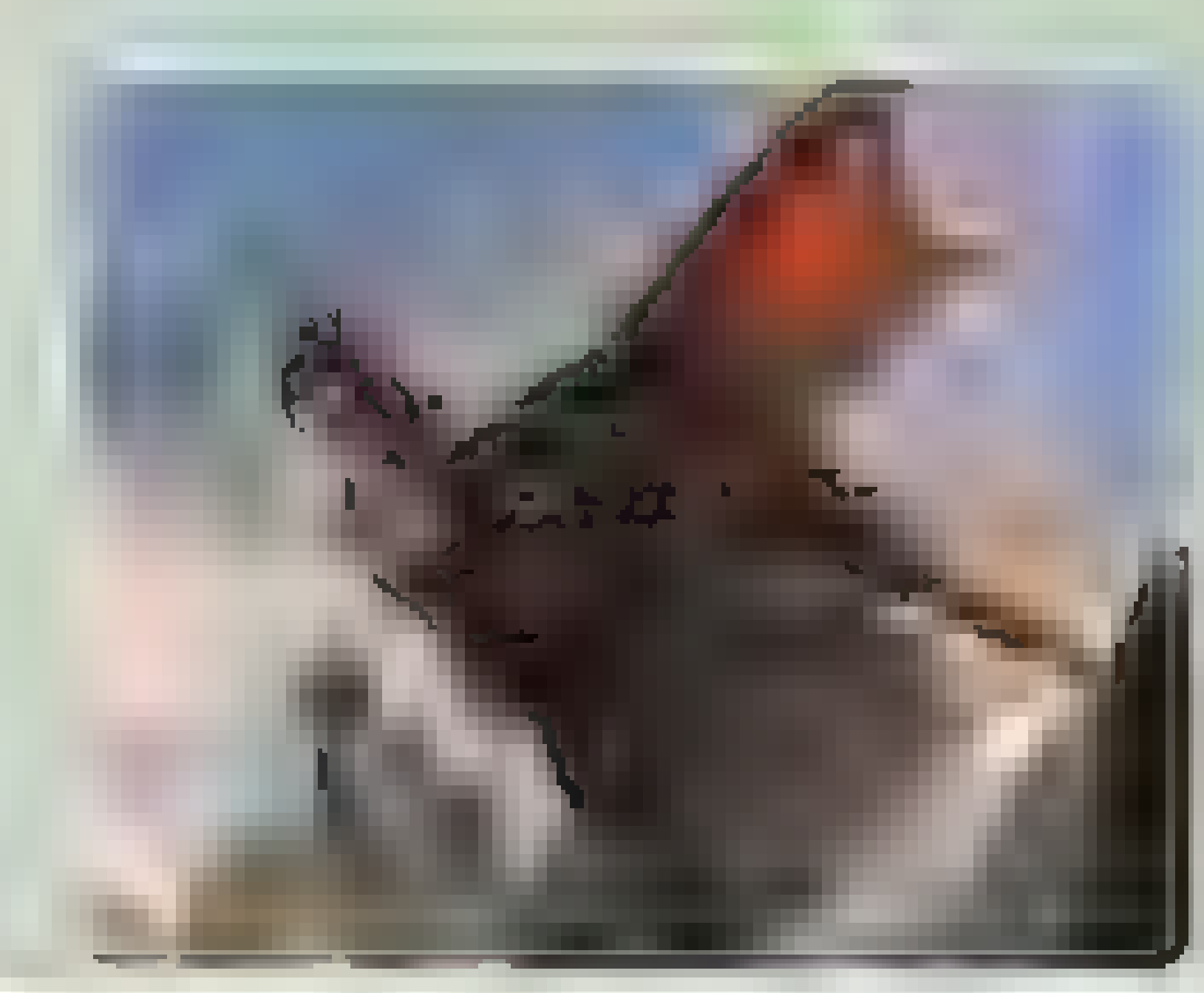
This Malaysian artist has an instantly appealing comic style welcoming new viewers with his larger-than-life characters, who are often breaking through something or in a mad rush to get somewhere. His use of colour in his action-packed compositions is also something to behold.



Theo Prins

artbytheo.deviantart.com

Displaying a distinct impressionistic style with stronger blood ties to Craig Mullins than the French masters, Theo's concept art is an explosion of colour and grand scale with implied detail. As an onlooker, there's a natural impulse to add story and minutiae – to get involved.



Aki Zhao

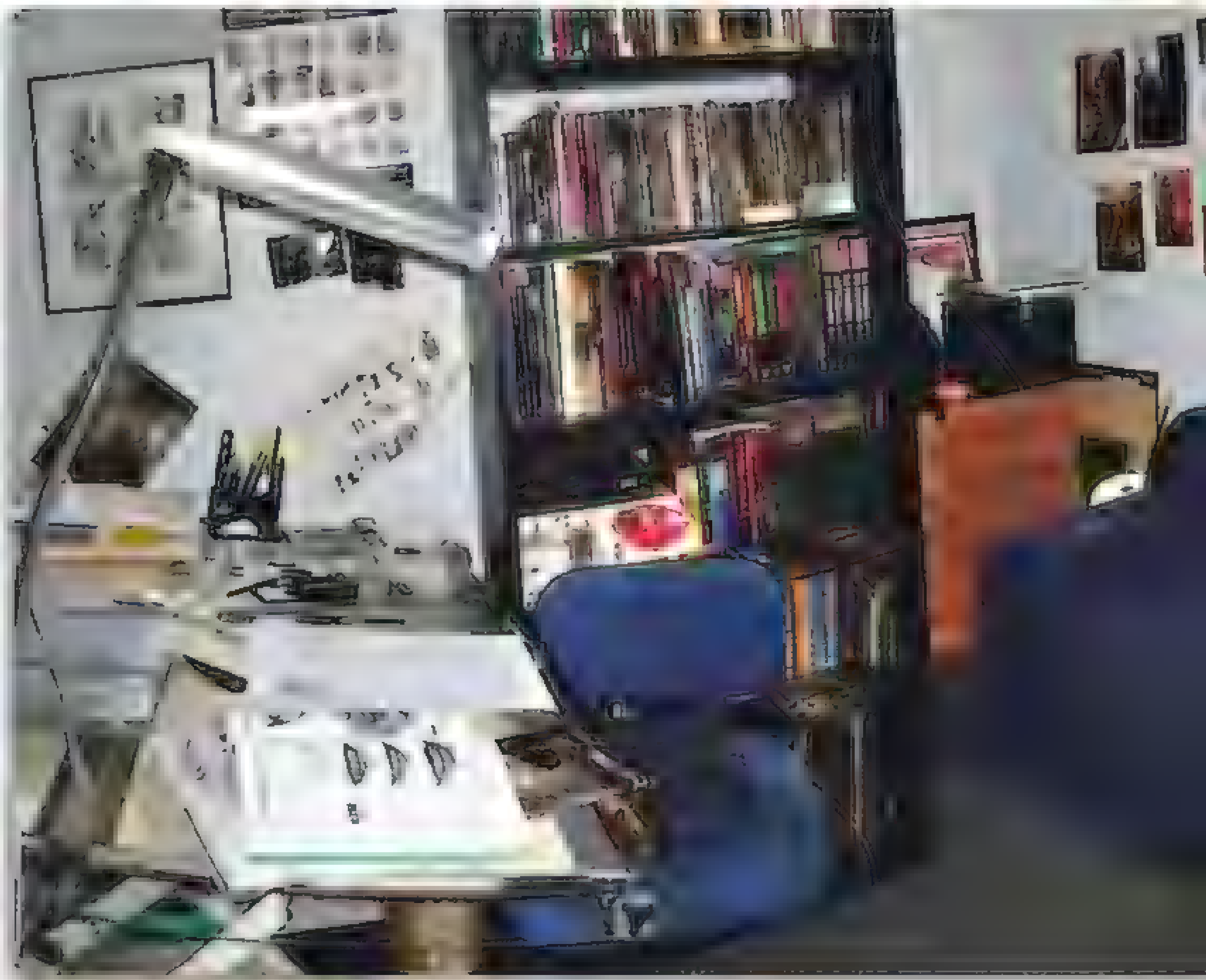
akizhao.deviantart.com

There are a lot of exquisite portraits and character sketches here. All of which makes the fully finished, high-action pieces all the more remarkable – you just don't expect to see them. This is an accomplished artist showing off his full range, however, and that's always great to see.

The lamp gives out a daylight fluorescent light which enables me to recreate accurate colours when painting traditionally. The great advantage about this lamp is the second clamp, which makes it possible to be attached to an easel.

This bookcase is full of reference including anatomy, history and art from some of my favourite artists. This has been built up over many years and although the internet is invaluable, books can sometimes throw up far more random ideas than a Google search.

The sofa is where I relax and catch up with my reading... sometimes!



My drafting table where all the traditional drawing happens. It's regularly buried under piles of drawings, and unfortunately the inevitable paperwork that comes with being a freelance artist.

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Dave Kendall

Shed head Dave Kendall invites us down his chalet to take a seat on his comfy couch and check out his gaming skills

My studio is a custom-built shed/chalet in my back garden. I'd been cramped into one room of the house, but when my son arrived it was time to address my working space.

The room is split diagonally, with my digital set-up occupying the darkest corner and my drafting table and somewhat large reference library across the studio. There's a sofa along one wall, where I'm [illegible] believed in my spare time [illegible] to sit and relax [illegible]. This doesn't occur as often as I thought it would. However, having somewhere to relax in my studio is important.

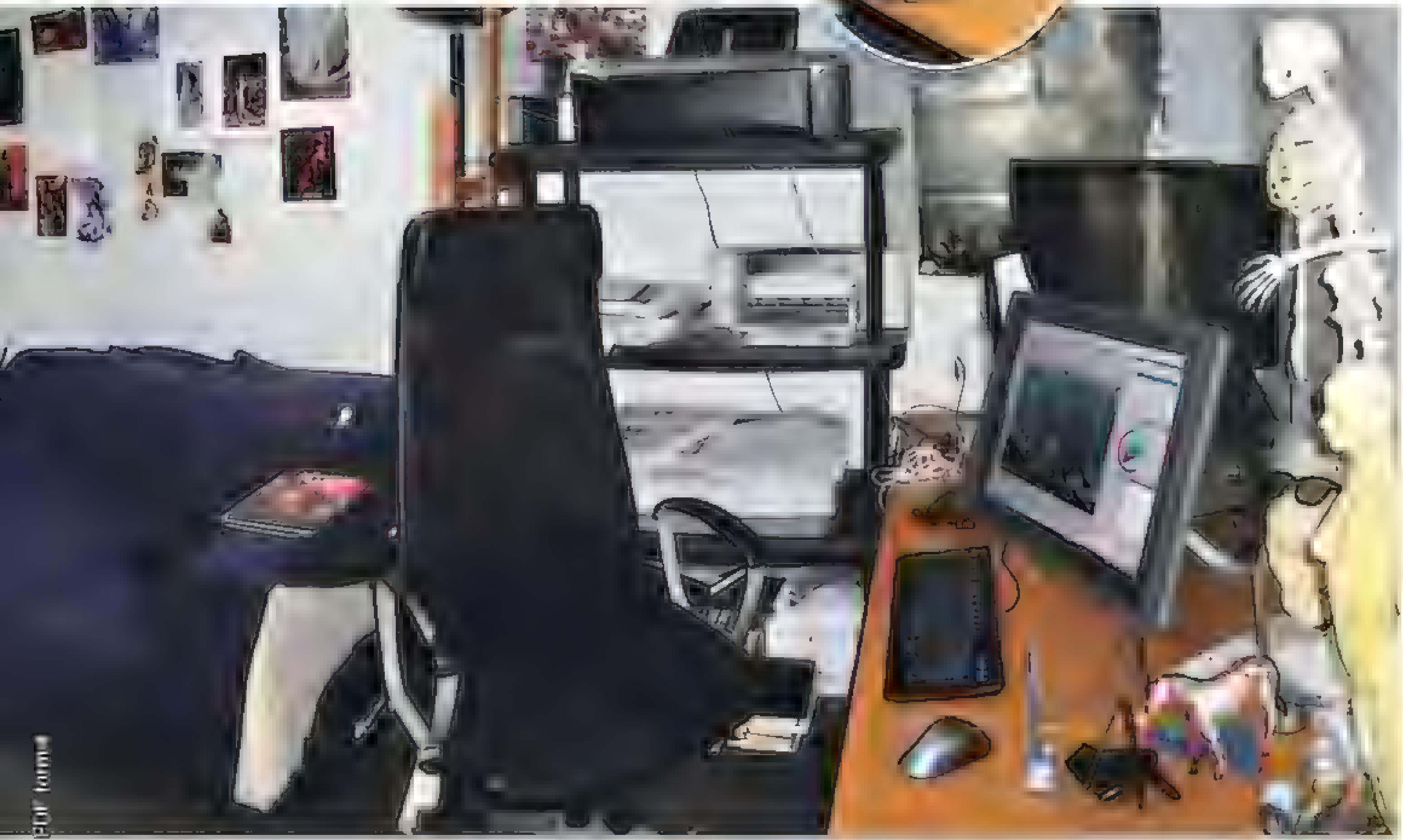
In the far corner is my plan chest where I keep all my traditional work and materials. The shed is incredibly well lit for traditional drawing and painting, but it can be completely blacked out when working digitally.

Comfort is important when working. Because the studio is outside, insulation for hot and cold conditions is vital. The building [illegible]

A Belkin gamepad programmed with all my keyboard shortcuts is probably one of the most useful time-saving tools I have. The device is fully customisable and even multiple keystrokes are handled with the push of just one key

All my printers and scanners are within easy reach of my digital set-up. Group your space into areas because it'll make the workflow process smoother

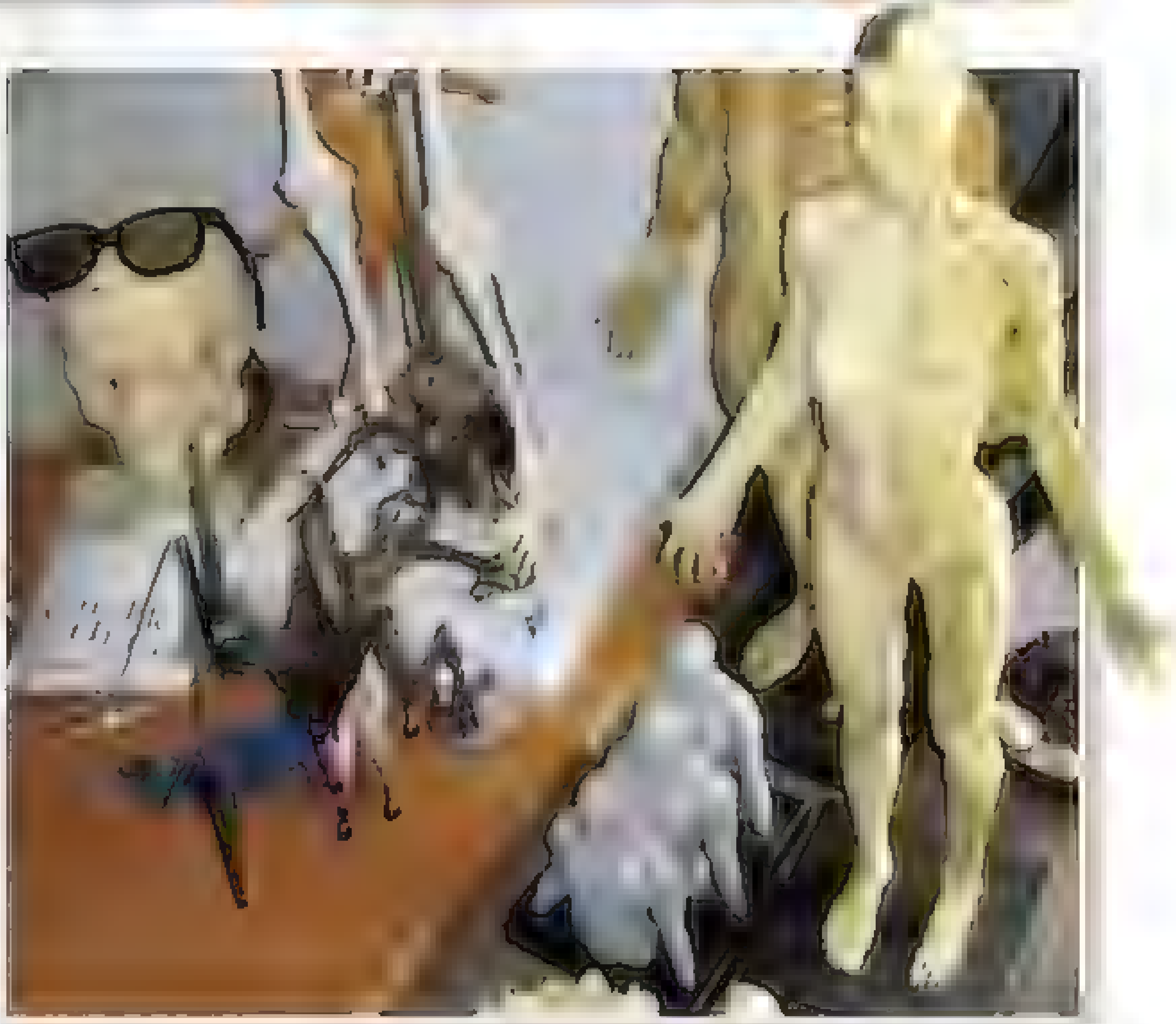
This is my trusty Cintiq and digital set-up. I have a calibrated Eizo monitor to make sure that my work for print is colour accurate



My drafting table overlooked by an original John Buscema Conan page and surrounded by books

summer. All the chairs are ergonomic so I don't suffer from the long hours I spend sitting in them. Mentally, I've arranged the space so that it's really enjoyable to work. I don't feel cramped, but it's a cosy and comforting working space. And I'm surrounded by reference books and graphic novels – so much so that the studio is slightly unbalanced by the weight! But still I wouldn't be without them.

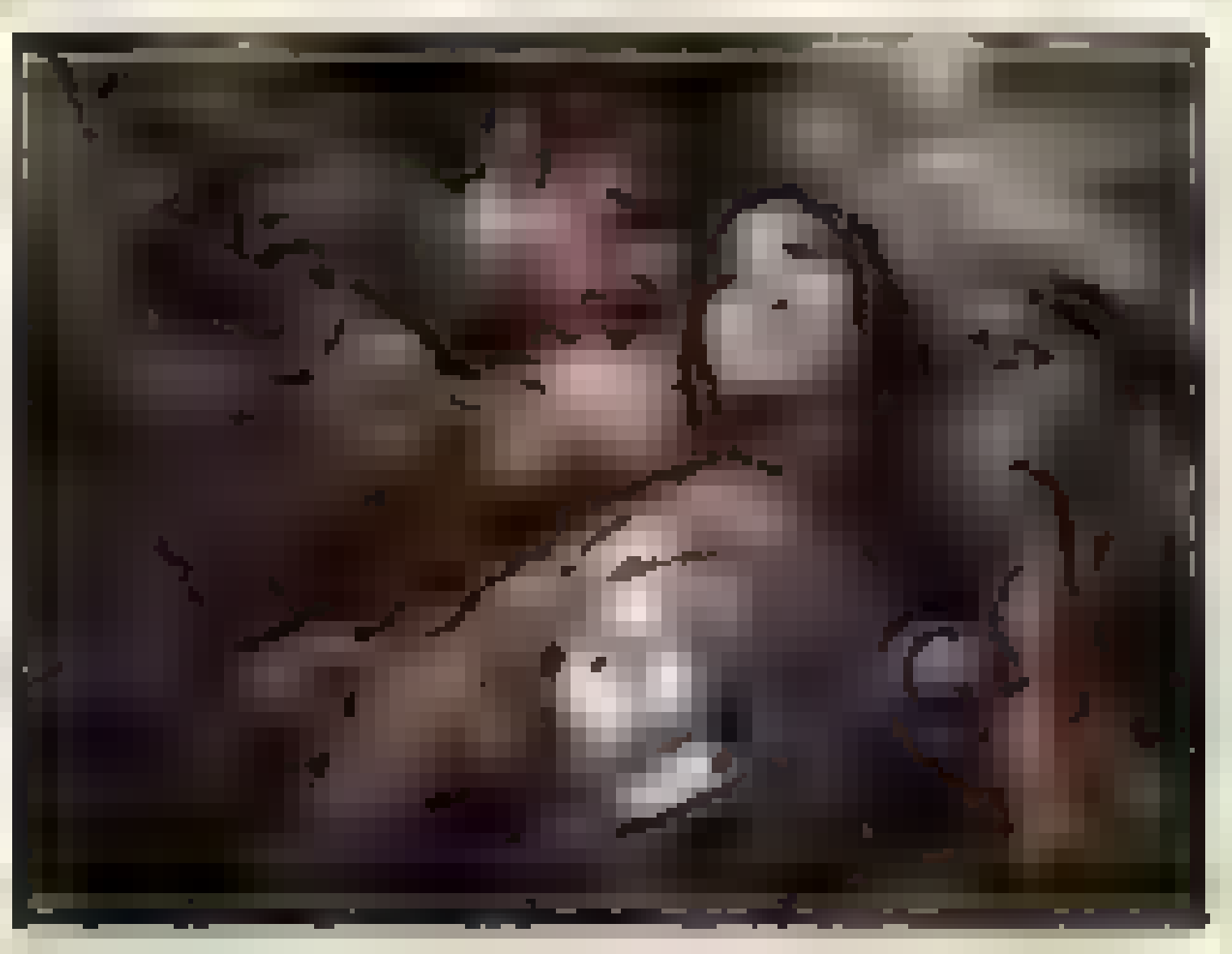
Dave is a freelance illustrator working in England. He's painted comics, book covers, card art and more. See his work at rustybaby.com.



I find it invaluable to have 3D models available to help with anatomy and lighting. The male and female models and grey busts come from anatomytools.com

In short...

The latest news in brief for digital artists



Fine art DVD

Fantasy artist Donato Giancola is working on a brand new DVD, focusing on his Joan of Arc painting. He's planning a summer release, and it'll include over five hours of tutorial. See his other DVDs for an idea of what to expect. **bit.ly/donata-g.**

InFamous Comic

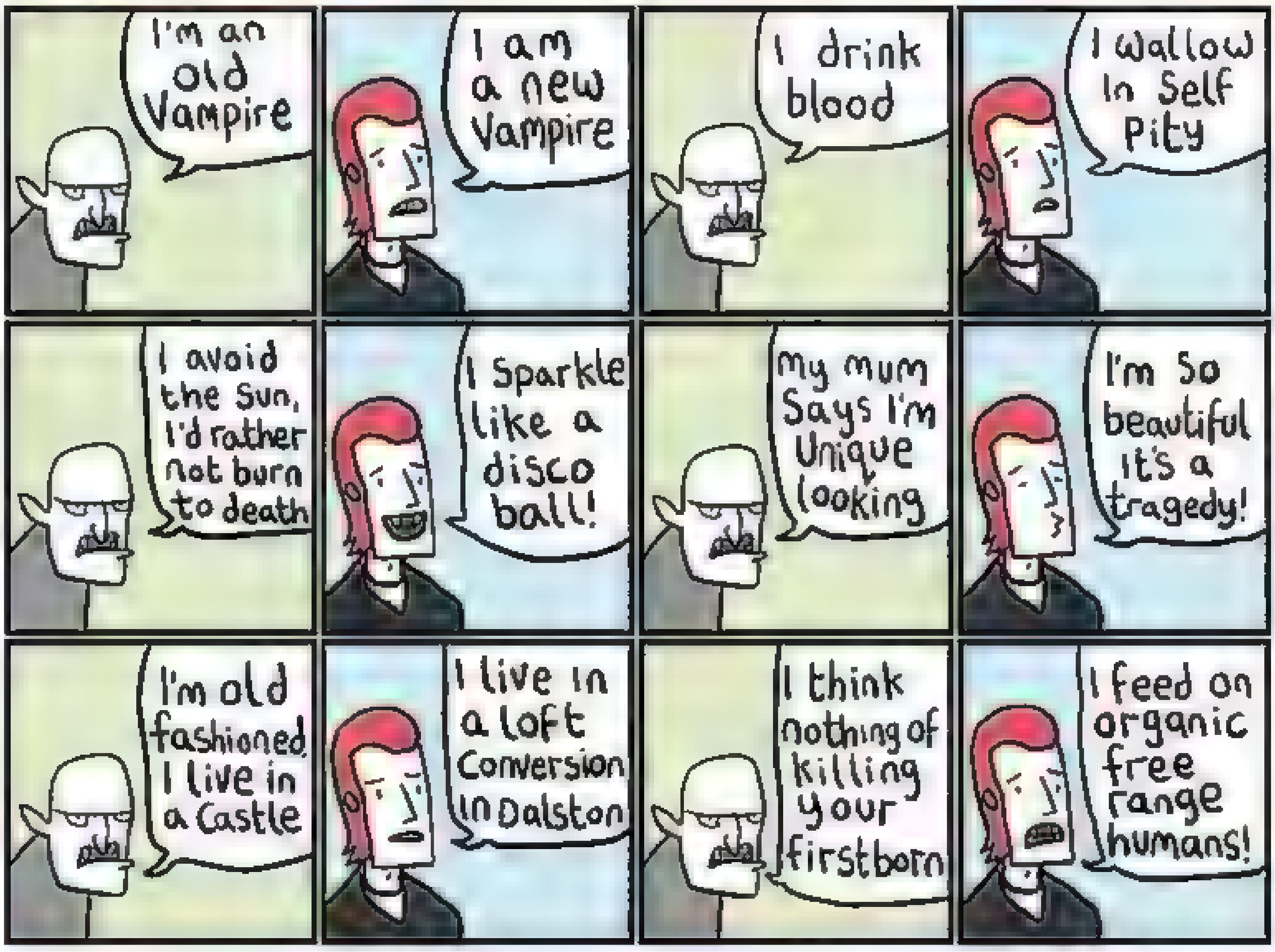
To coincide with the release of inFamous 2, Sony asked comic writers and artists to produce new strips, including Pat Mills and JAKe. Celebrities such as Lady Ga Ga get the inFamous treatment. See **bit.ly/infamous2-comics.**

The Sims Video

Film concept artist Aaron Sims and his FX studio have made a new short film called ARCHETYPE. For a reminder of the great creature designs he's created in the past, see issue 37, page 44, and for the film, go here: **bit.ly/aaron-sims**

Life is Humiliation

by Matt Boyce



I'm an old Vampire
I am a new Vampire
I drink blood
I wallow In Self Pity
I avoid the Sun, I'd rather not burn to death
I Sparkle like a disco ball!
My mum Says I'm Unique looking
I'm So beautiful it's a tragedy!
I'm old fashioned I live in a Castle
I live in a loft Conversion in Dalston
I think nothing of killing your firstborn
I feed on organic free range humans!

Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

"Hopefully I'll be a little footnote in fantasy art history one day, and reach a hand out from the grave when I'm long gone."

Brad Rigney plans to become a modest member of the undead art community Page 58

Comic relief

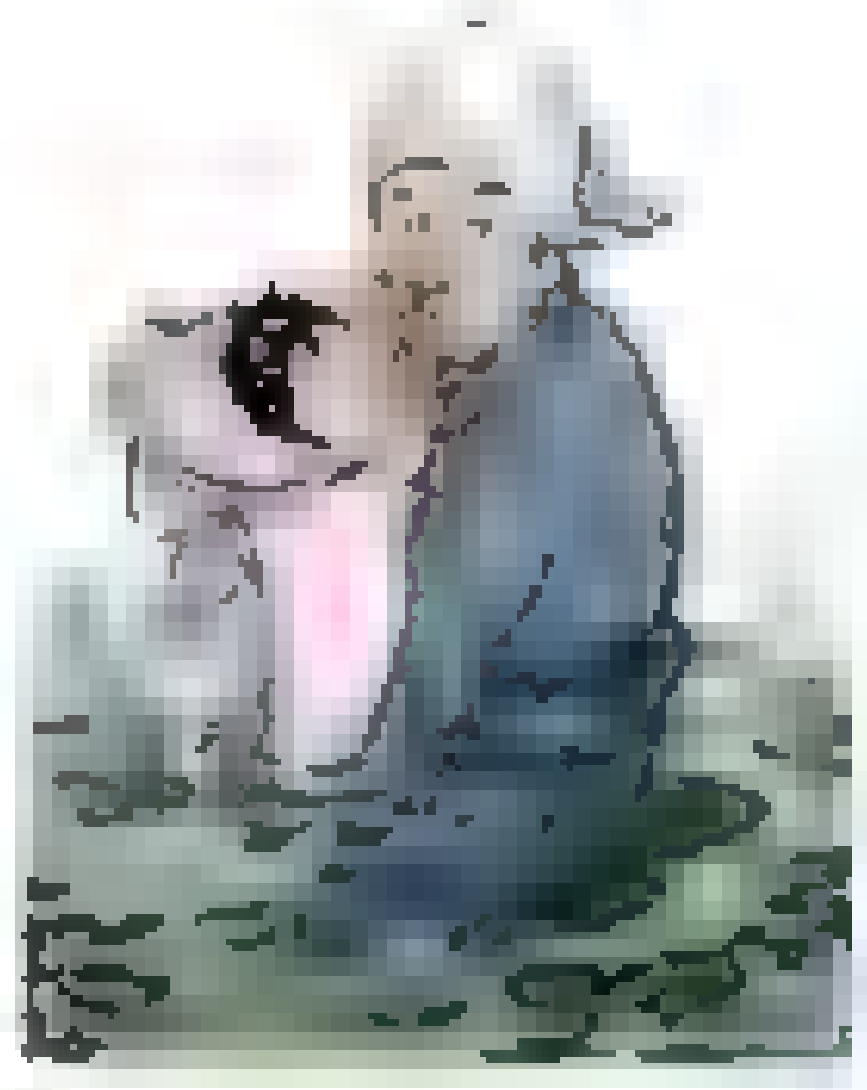
Charity anthology Digital artists work on the Spirit of Hope, raising funds for the survivors of the Japan and New Zealand disasters

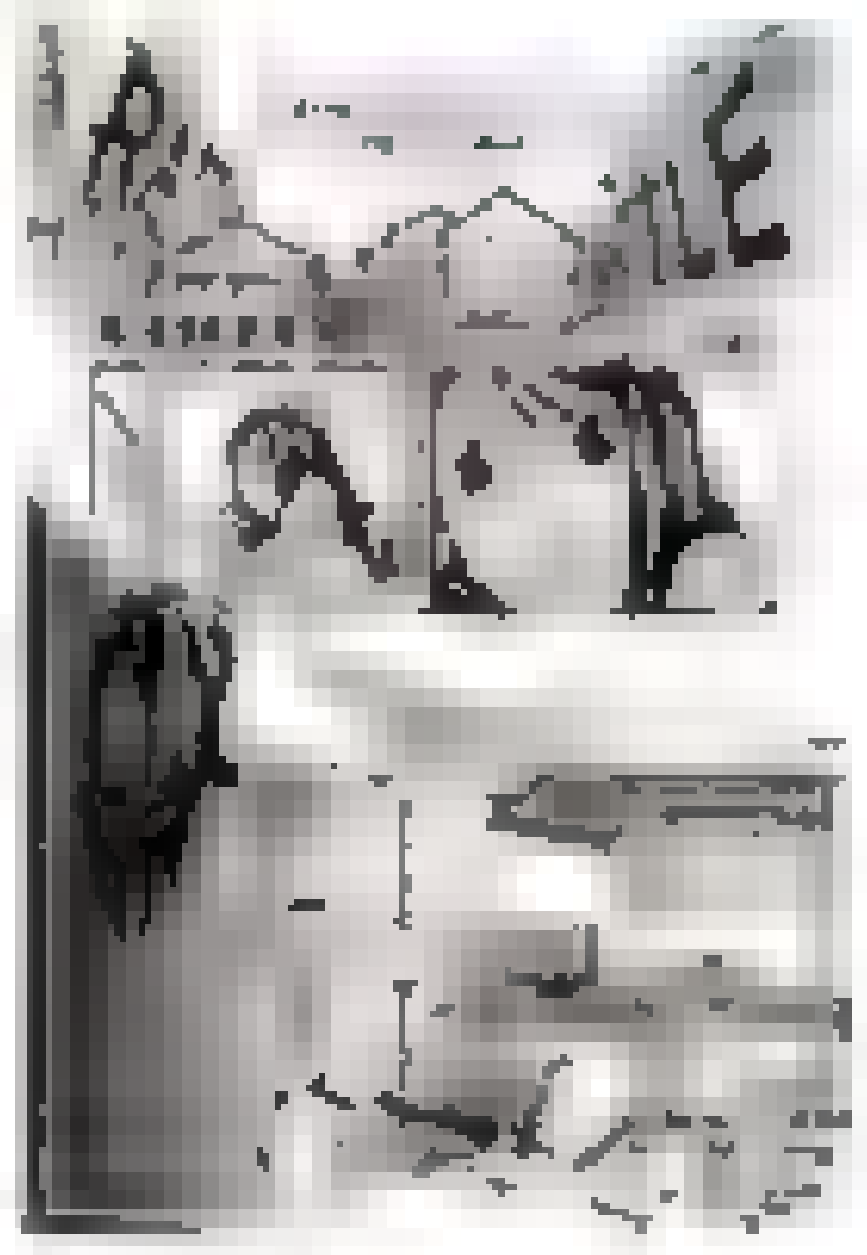
The British comics community, led by the Comic Book Alliance, has created a new graphic novel anthology, Spirit of Hope, to raise funds for those hit by the New Zealand and Japanese natural disasters.

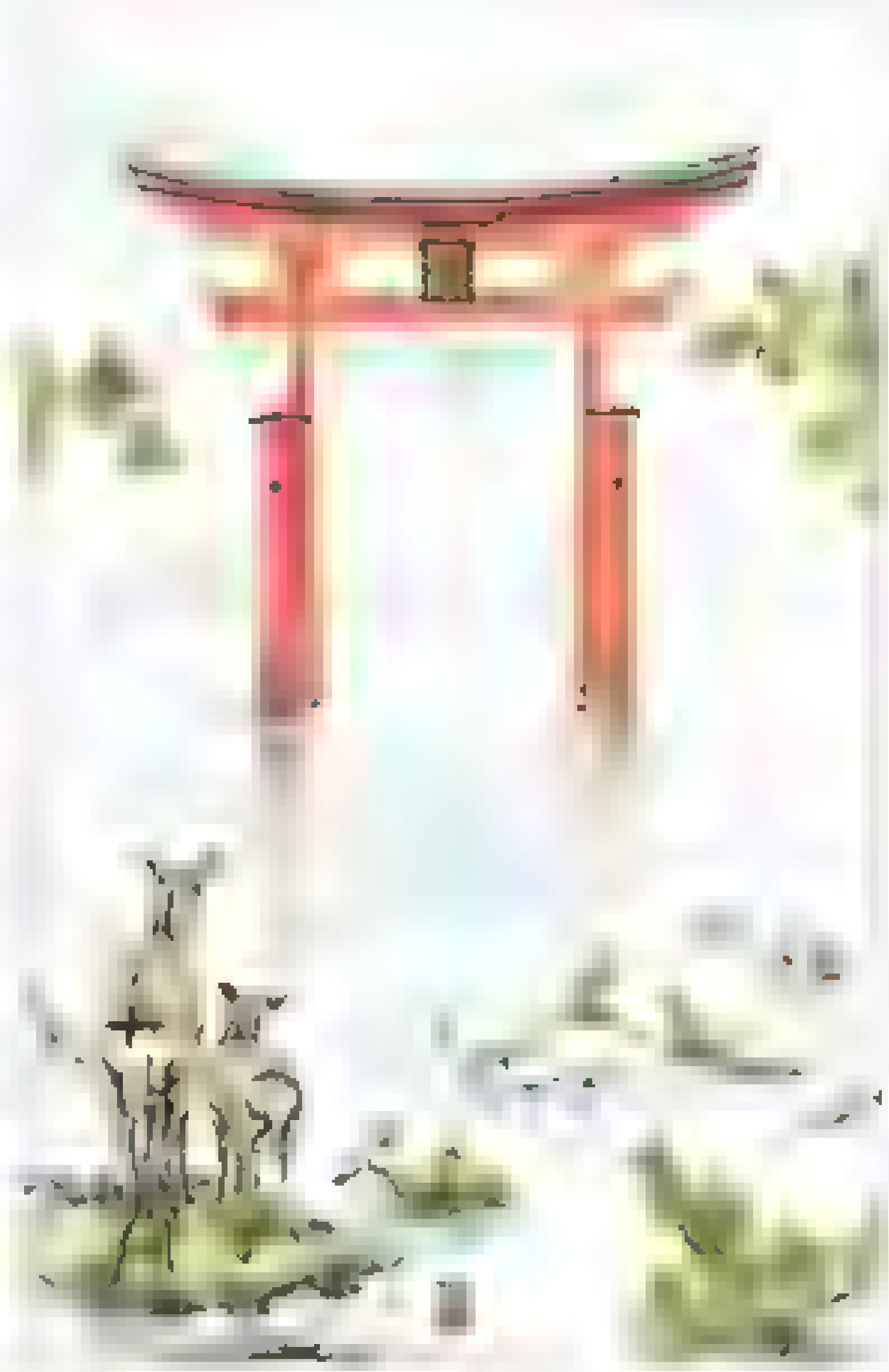
The book includes the work of over 8 writers, artists, colourists, letterers and editors, who donated their time and work free of charge. Tim Pilcher, chair of the CBA, was touched by the response. "We put a call out to the artistic community and asked for a strip, pin-up or anything that encapsulated that struggle for them," he says.

Liam Sharp provided a new strip. "I turned it around in about two or three days," he says. "The project demanded haste. It was going to count, so I jumped on it."

The book was put together within the two and a half weeks after the Japanese tsunami. Get your copy here **comicbookalliance.co.uk.**







Artists including Henry Flint and Peter Hogan worked on the project

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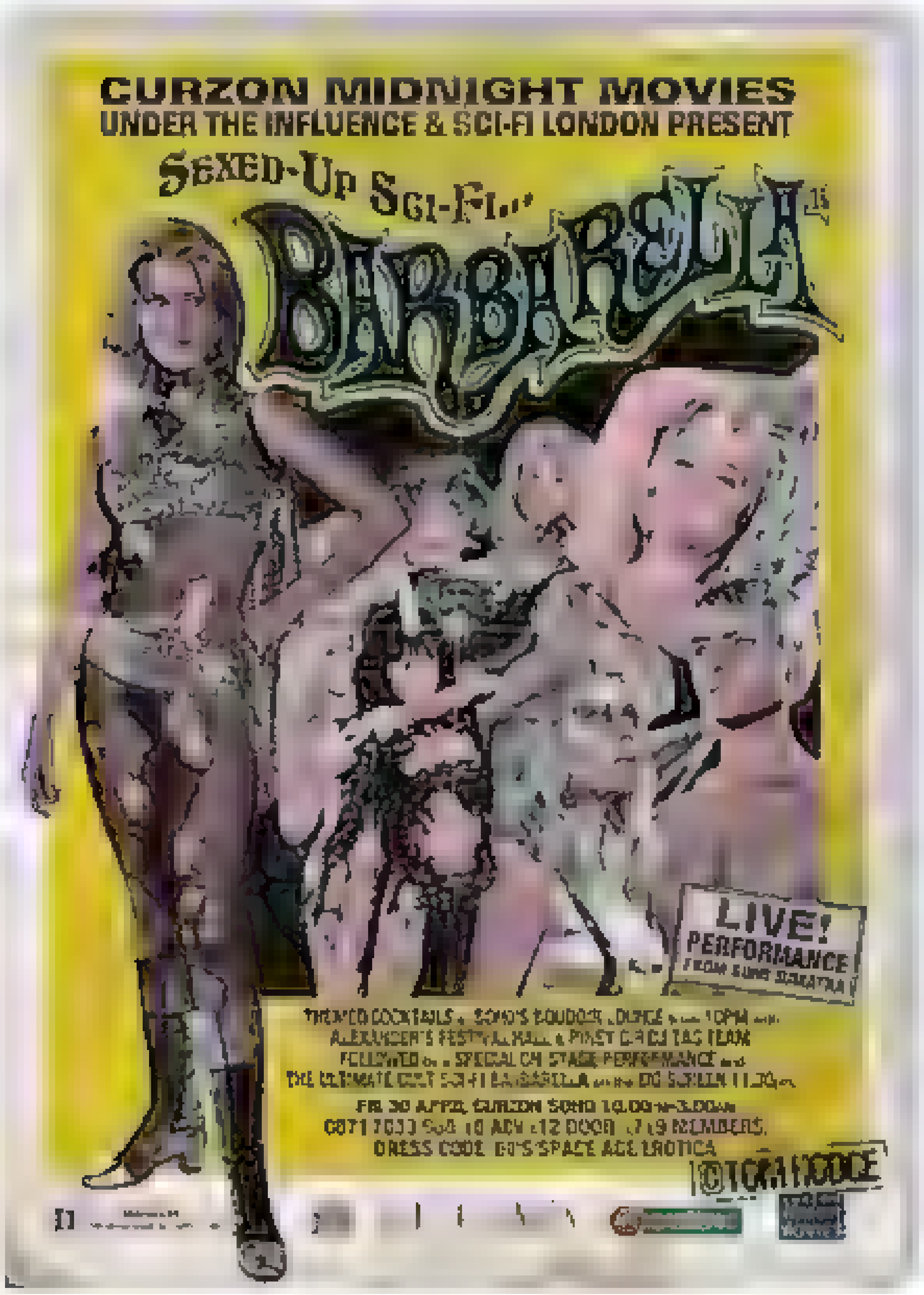
SCAN HERE

It's not just retro-looking films that Thomas focuses on – he also loves a good genre classic, such as 1968's sexed-up sci-fi film Barbarella


CURZON MIDNIGHT MOVIES
UNDER THE INFLUENCE & SCI-FI LONDON PRESENT
SEXED-UP SCI-FI
BARBARELLA
LIVE! PERFORMANCE
DRESS CODE: 60'S SPACE AGE EROTICA
©TOM HODGE

Giving it both barrels

Poster vogue Thomas Hodge wants to update the medium for the digital age

Thomas Hodge is a graphic designer by day, but by night he's The Dude, a freelance vintage poster artist on a mission: "To bring back the lost magic of the video cover and poster art."

There's certainly plenty of magic in his recent pieces, like his Father's Day, Barbarella and Hobo with a Shotgun posters, the last of which is a personal piece that Thomas made after getting inspired by the film's trailer.

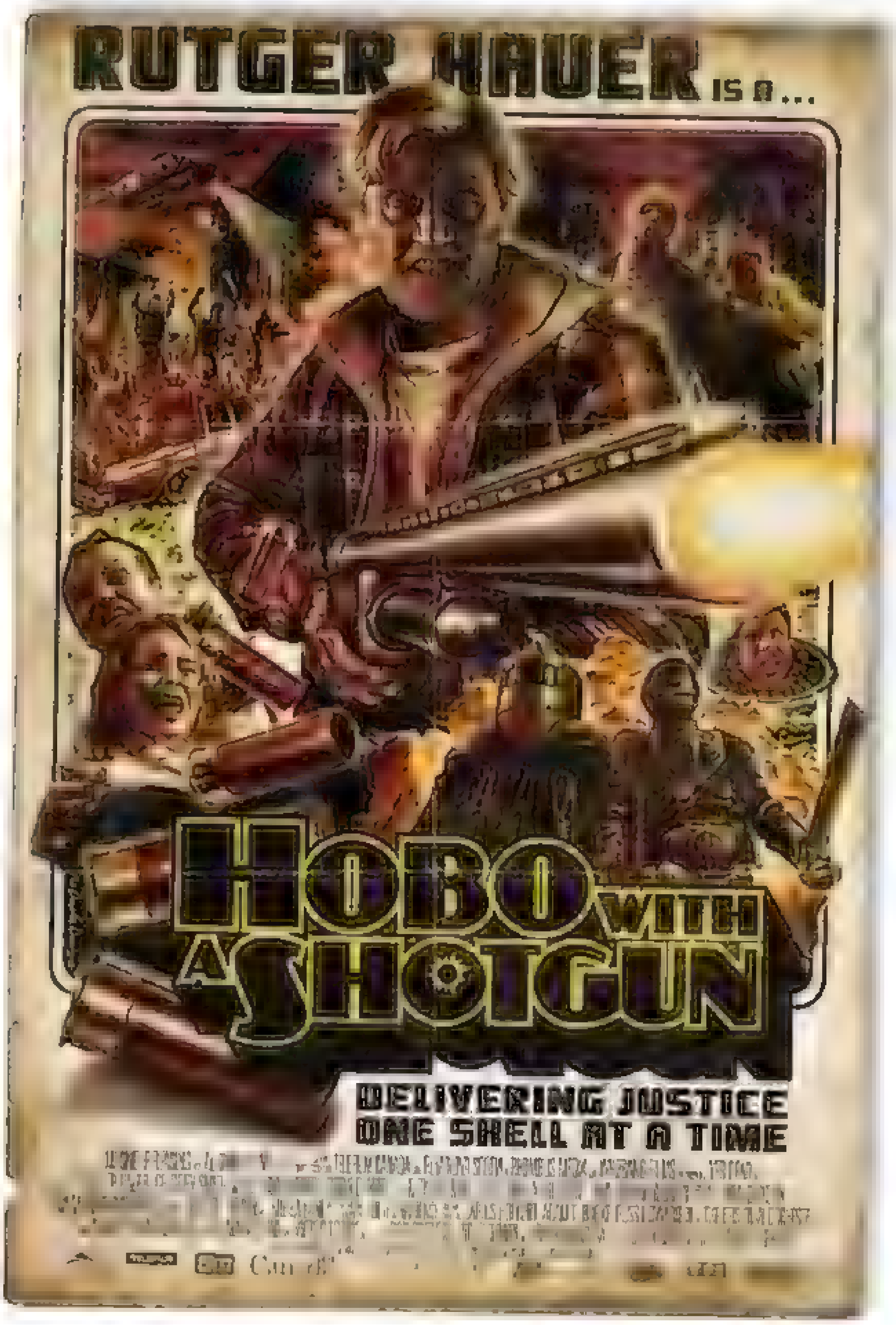
Although a designer for 10 years, it's been Thomas's passion rather than a potential pay cheque that inspired him to get back into this world of retro art. "It's all about personality," he says. "I've been trying to inject it into my art all my life, and that's exactly what those vintage posters have in spades, so it made sense to go back to my [illegible]."

For all his retro vintage attention to detail, Thomas's posters are drawn digitally. "I'm from the computer age after all," he says. "I even started drawing on an Atari ST."

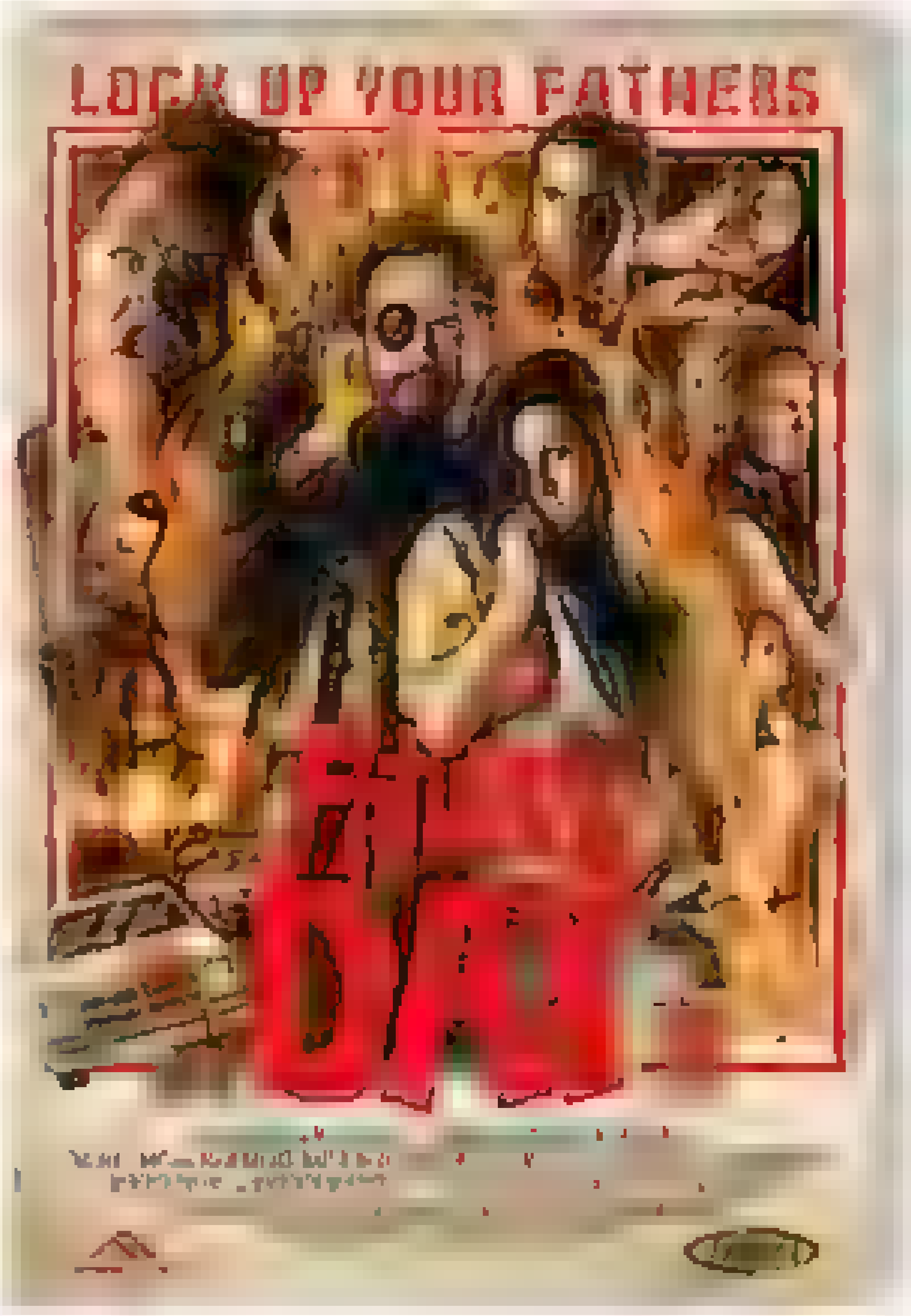
But even when Thomas uses Photoshop, it's the traditional poster artists such as Graham Humphreys that continue to inform his work. "He was the artist behind the posters for such 80s horror classics as Evil Dead 1 and 2 and A Nightmare on Elm Street. Graham made brilliant use of colours and created great, bold brush strokes," enthuses Thomas.

And there's growing interest in the digital retro style that he offers. "There's new dedicated sites like Mondo, with artists such as Tyler Stout and Olly Moss that are giving back some needed buzz and collectability to film poster art again."

See more of Thomas's art here: **thedudedesigns.blogspot.com**


RUTGER HAUER IS A...
HOBO WITH A SHOTGUN
DELIVERING JUSTICE ONE SHELL AT A TIME

The poster that Thomas created after seeing the trailer for Hobo With A Shotgun


LOCK UP YOUR FATHERS
FATHER'S DAY

Thomas's artwork for the four director-strong Astron-6 film Father's Day

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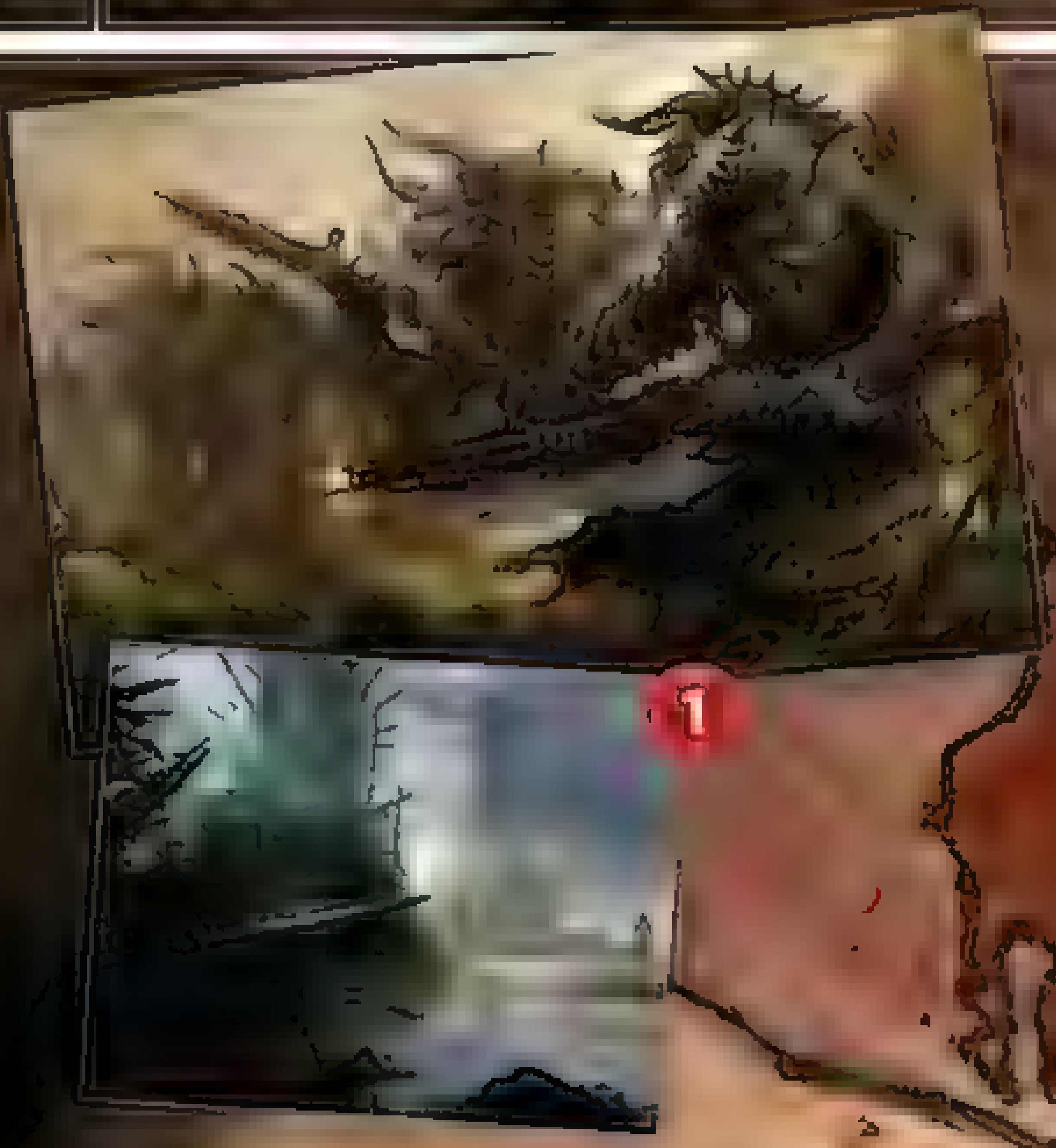
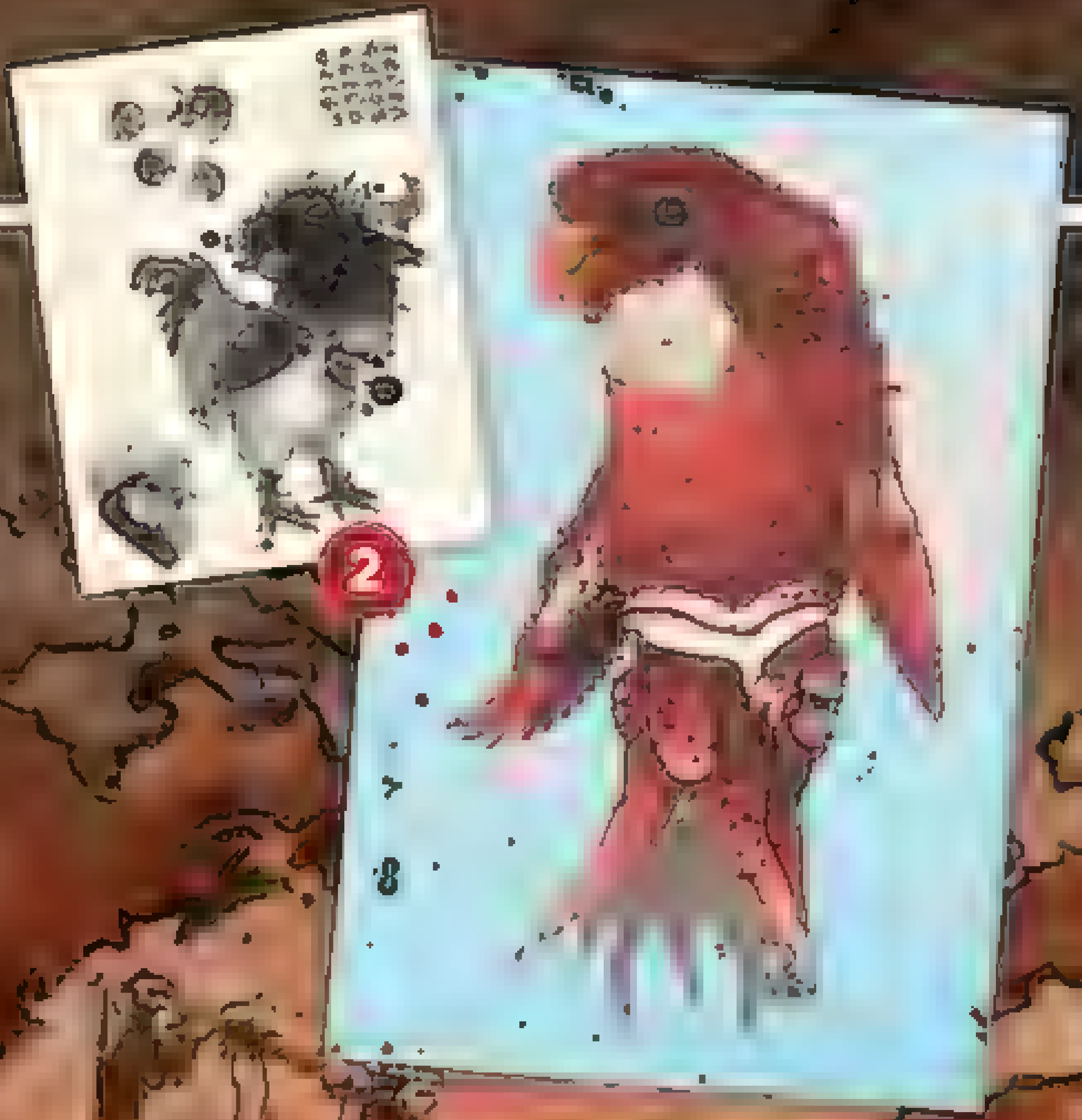




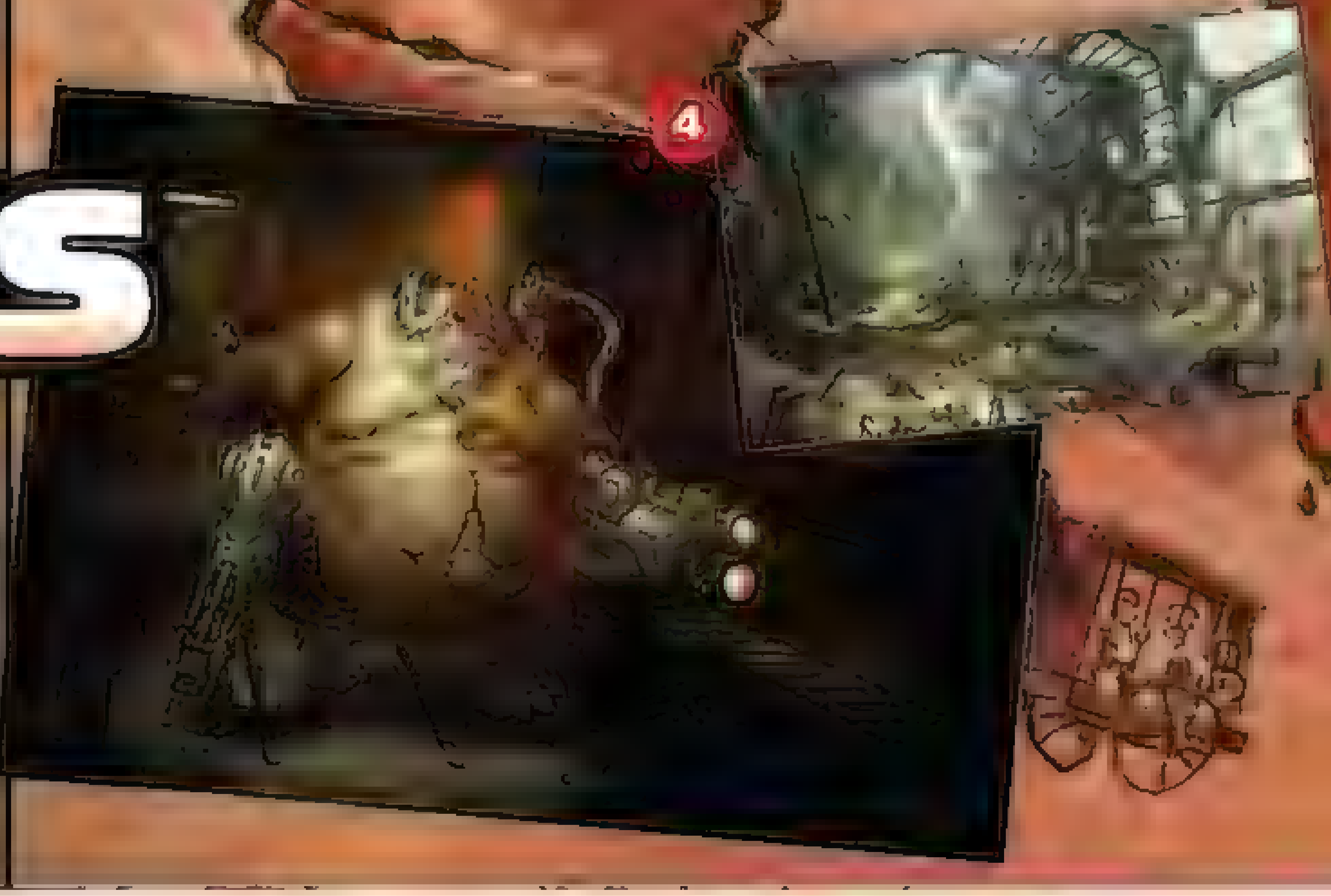
3
WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION
October 27-30, 2011
San Diego, CA
Saluting The Seas of Imagination

PLANET OF THE ARTS

HERE'S A RUNDOWN OF THE EVENTS AND ART BLOGS THAT HAVE GOT US IN A STIR THIS MONTH. IF YOU'VE GOT A STORY OR EVENT THAT SHOULD BE FEATURED HERE, SEND US THE DETAILS: **PLANET@IMAGINEFX.COM**. CHEERS!

Beren

Beren Neale, Staff Writer



KEKAI KOTAKI

Illustrator, US

1 Kekai has a fine gallery [illegible] including work for Wizards of the Coast and Fantasy Flight, [illegible] blog [illegible] delivers a taste of his concept work on Guild Wars 2.

kekalart.com

MEDIUM PHOBIC

Illustrator, Canada

2 [illegible] D[illegible] is a [illegible] project to draw 10,000 vertebrates, where the artwork combines various [illegible] to fantasy creatures. Bird [illegible]

mediumphobic.com

WORLD FANTASY CONVENTION

27th – 30 October [illegible]

3 This year's theme is saluting the seas of the imagination and a highlight will be the art show featuring Lauren K Cannon among others.

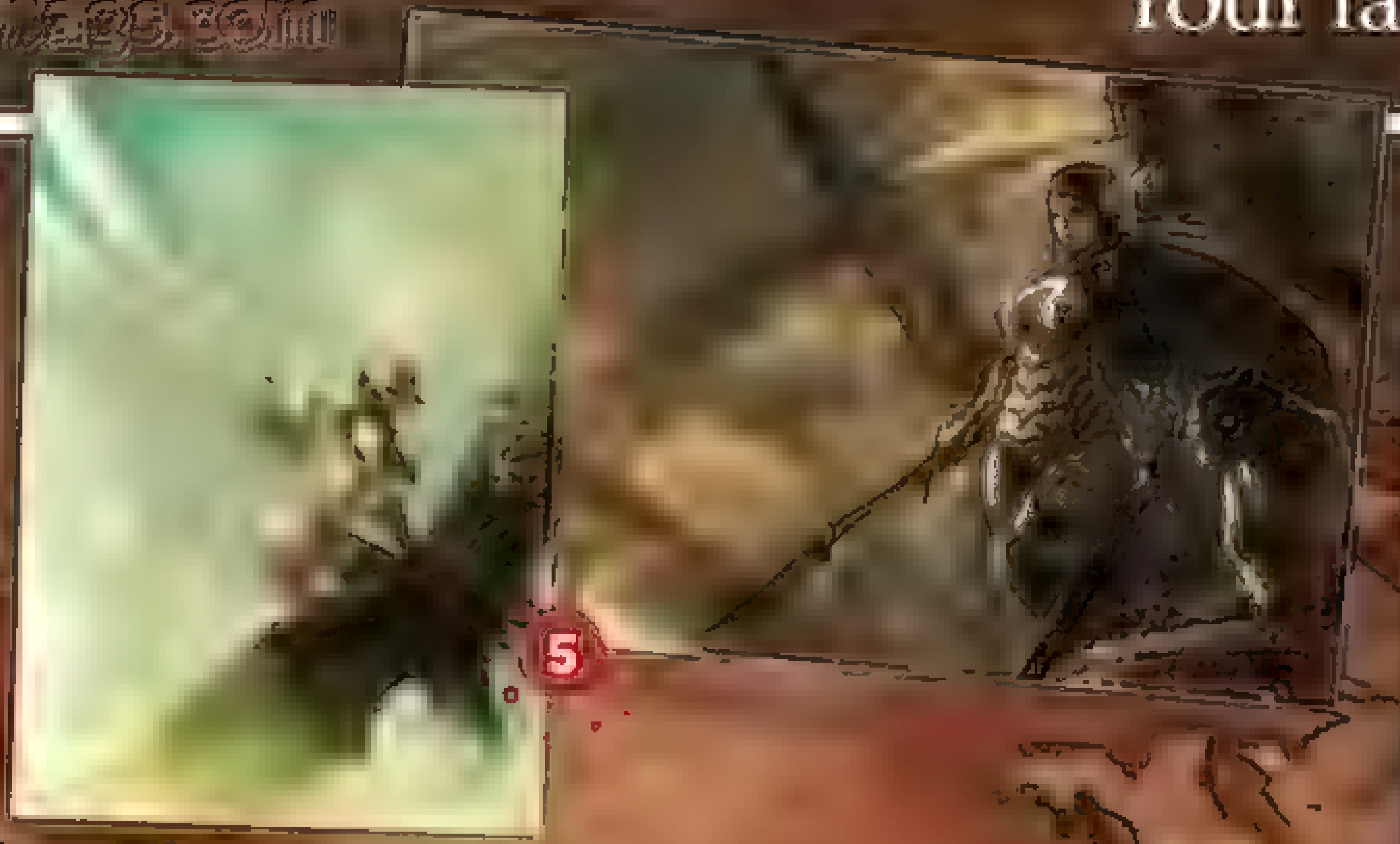
wfc2011.org

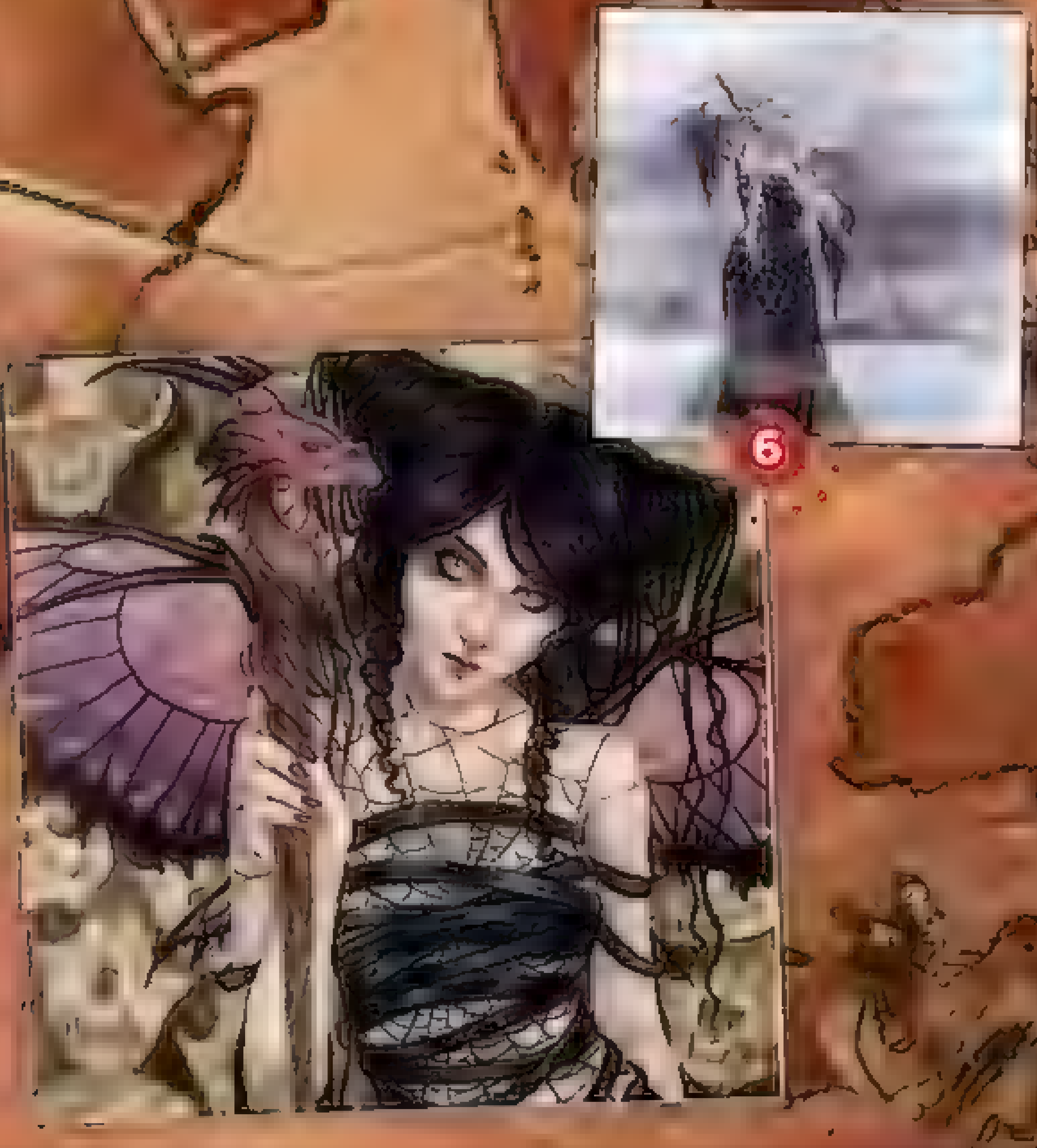
BEN SHAFER

Illustrator, US

4 Not only does Ben have the perfect [illegible] for this blog, but he's got some ingenious creative skills to match [illegible] features of creations for a [illegible] inspired by gritty computer games.

conceptartblog.com





TAHRA ART

Illustrator, South Korea

5 The portfolio of Kyon [illegible] doesn't mess about: [illegible] got the illustrator's greatest [illegible] art straight on [illegible] styles ranging from manga to storybook

tahraart.com

SELINA FENECH

Illustrator, Australia

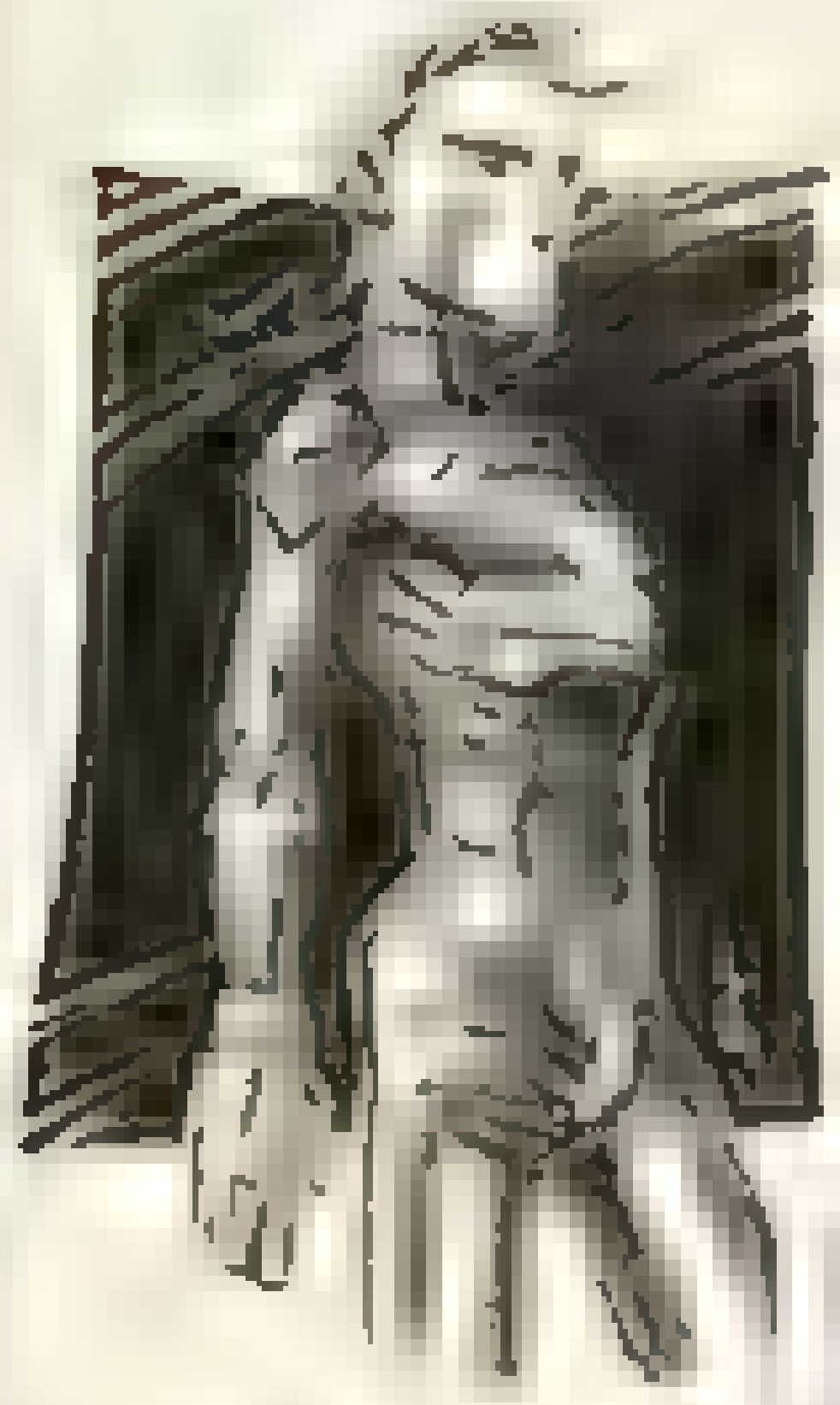
6 Selina Fenech is one of Australia's finest fantasy artists and her online portfolio is easy to navigate and full of great pieces. [illegible] check out her fairy art gift shop too.

selinafenech.com

SKETCH JAM

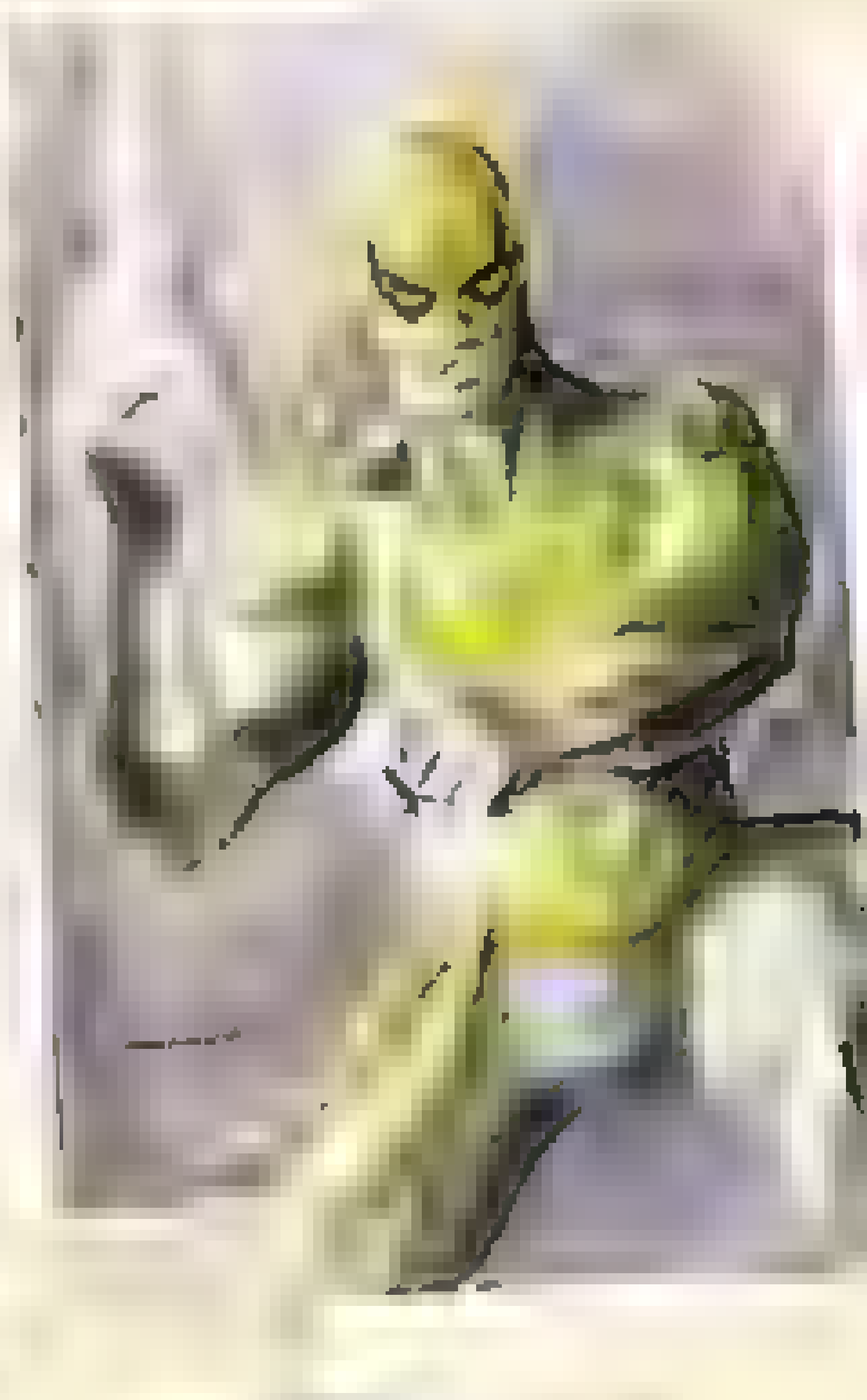
This Malaysian drink and draw group is on a mission to strengthen ties within the comic industry, over a nice, cold beer

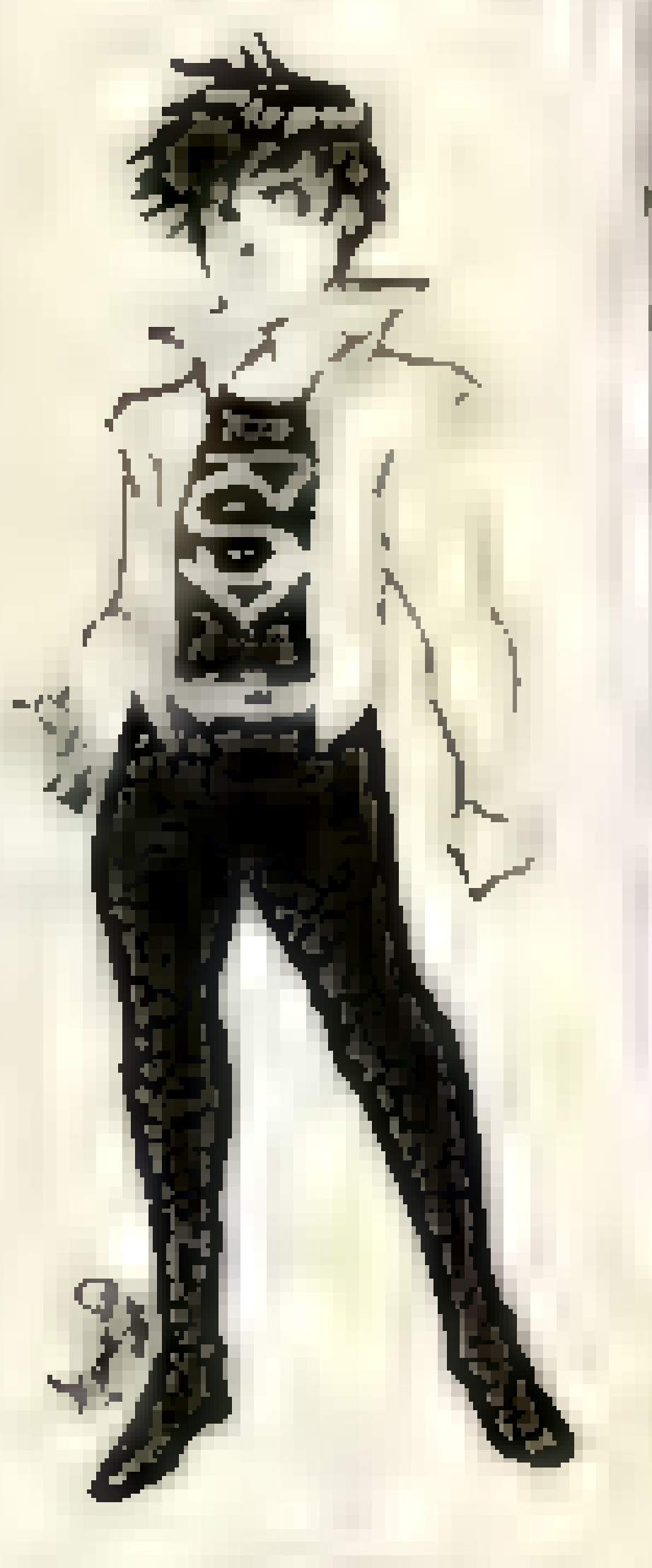
Pekomik sketch jam, Malaysia

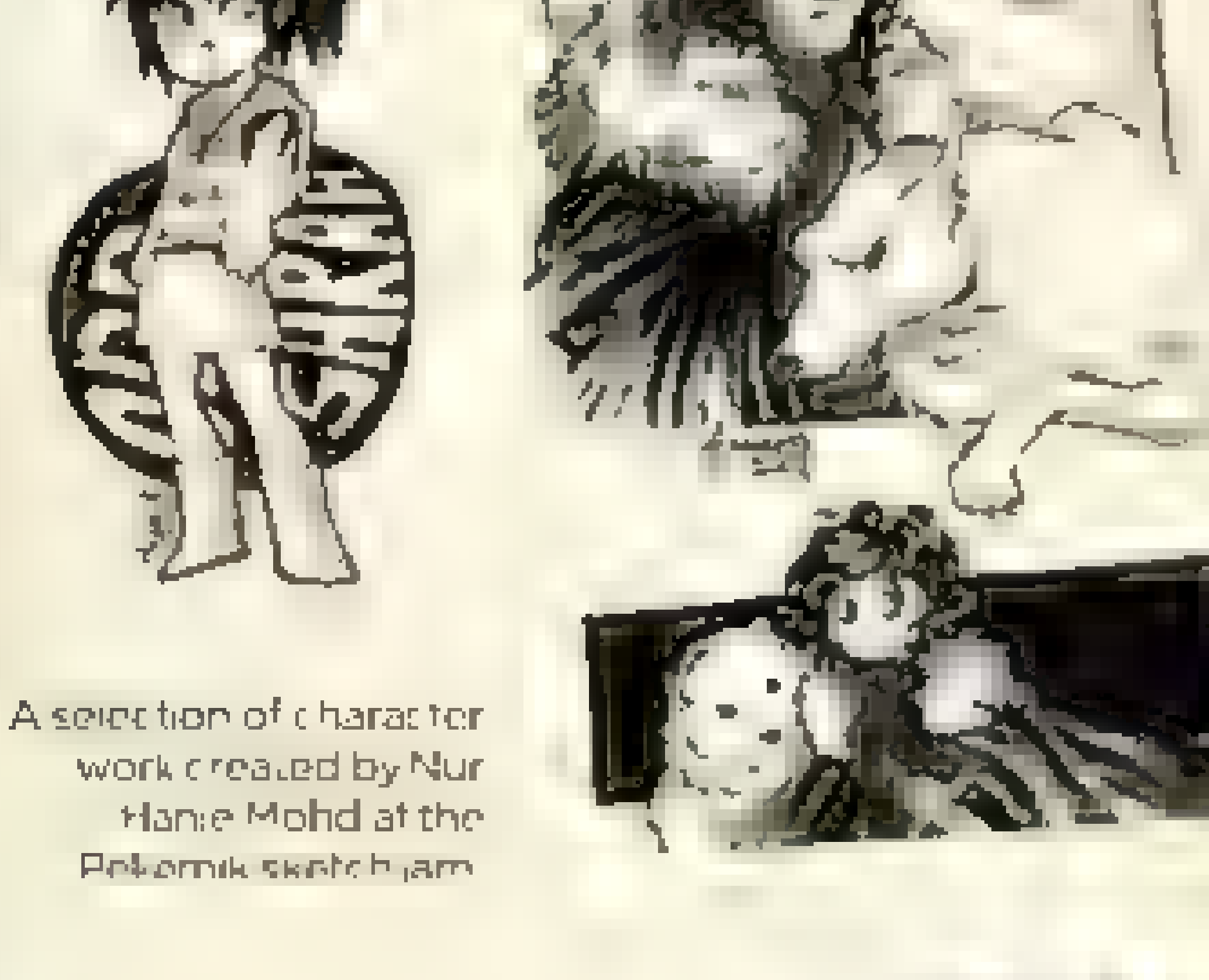


Character work by Alan Quah, who's been drawing comics for over 25 years

Sheldon Goh helps organise the Pekomik sketch jam, and took the opportunity to come up with this fighting hero







A selection of character work created by Nur Hanie Mohd at the Pekomik sketch jam

ImagineFX Forum Winners

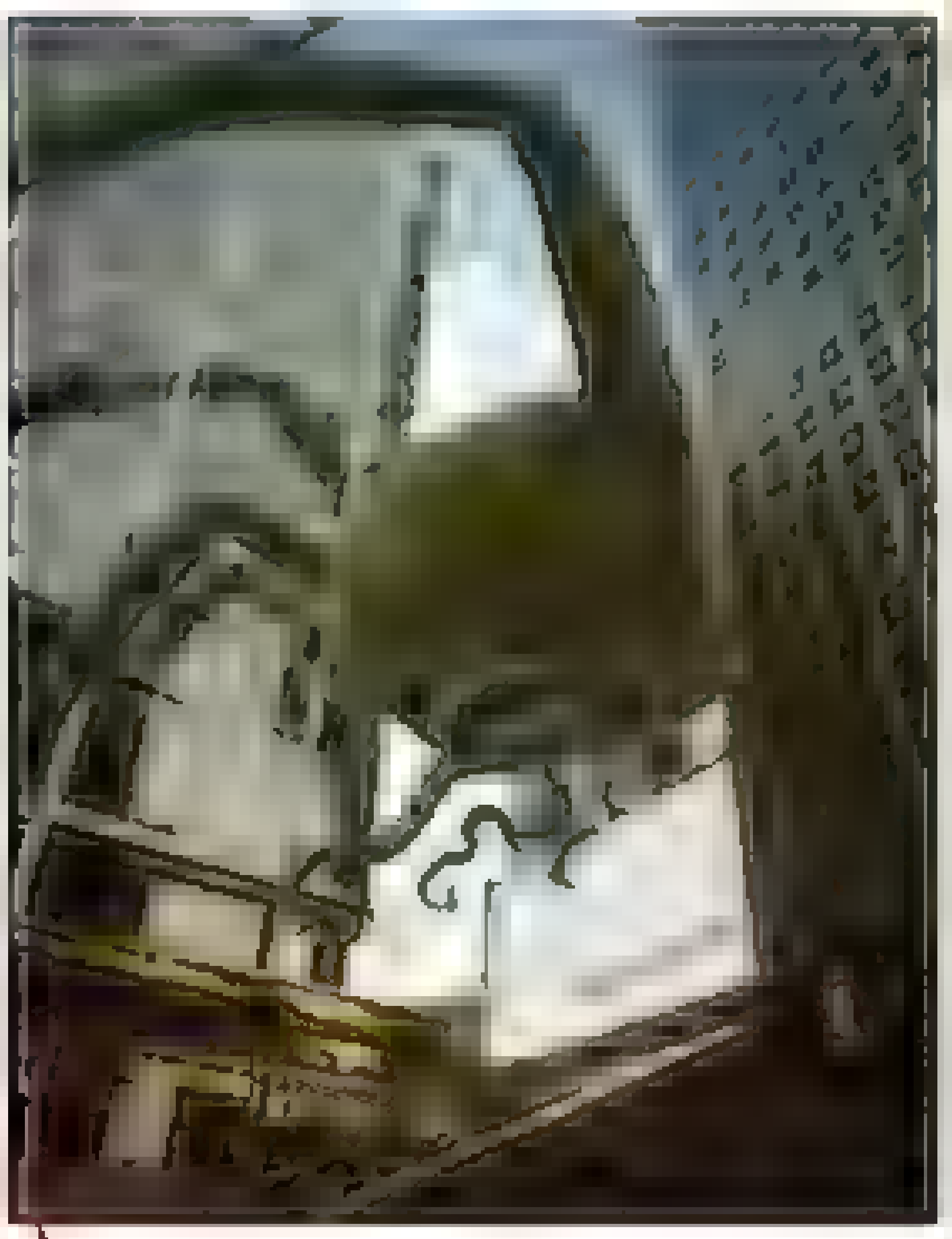
Image of the month

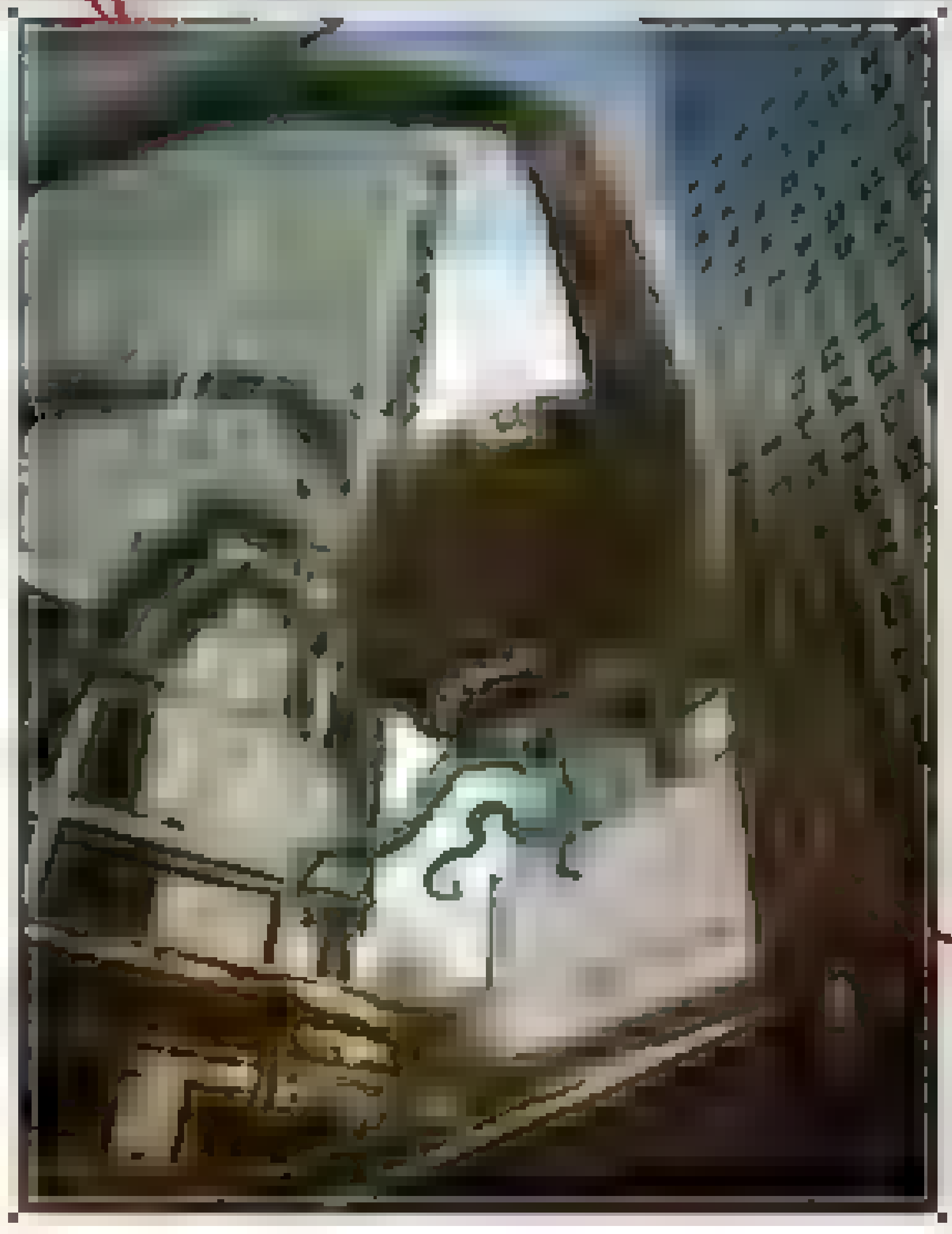
A forum old hand takes on a new technique to produce this winning image

Juan has been a Forum Challenge competitor for a while now, producing some killer images week after week, and in this month's winning image he displays all his usual imagination and fun.

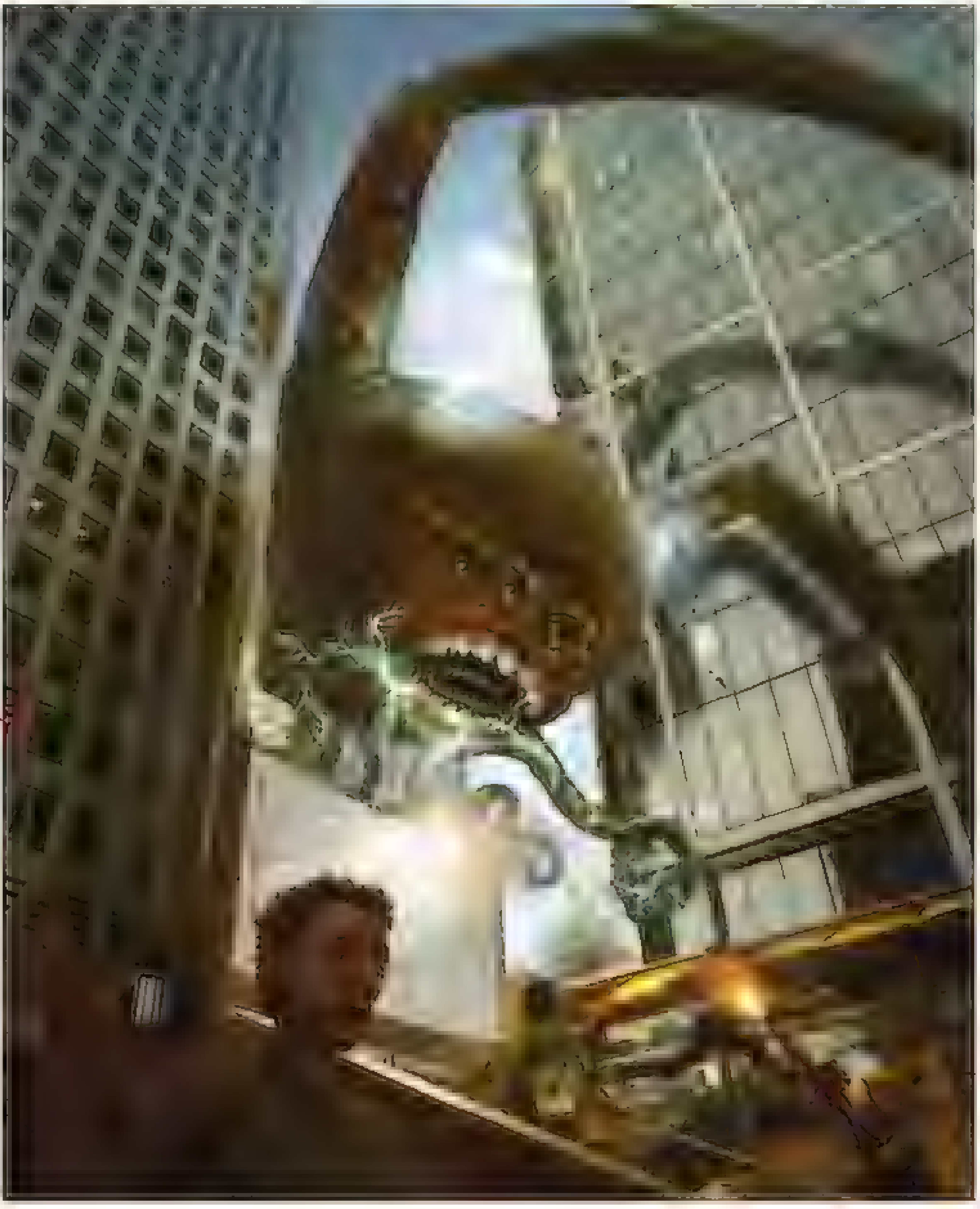
"I love drawing creatures and monsters and so this challenge was perfect for me," he says. "I wanted to try a new technique by starting the image with a photograph, so I used one of my pictures of Canary Wharf in London then went to work on it in Photoshop." With the image of the [illegible] and a new [illegible] approach, we expect to see even more from Juan in the future.

MYFX TITLE: **Huge Alien Parasite Invaders**
WINNER: **Juan Antonio Blanco (Guang)**
GALLERY: **imaginefx.com/guang**



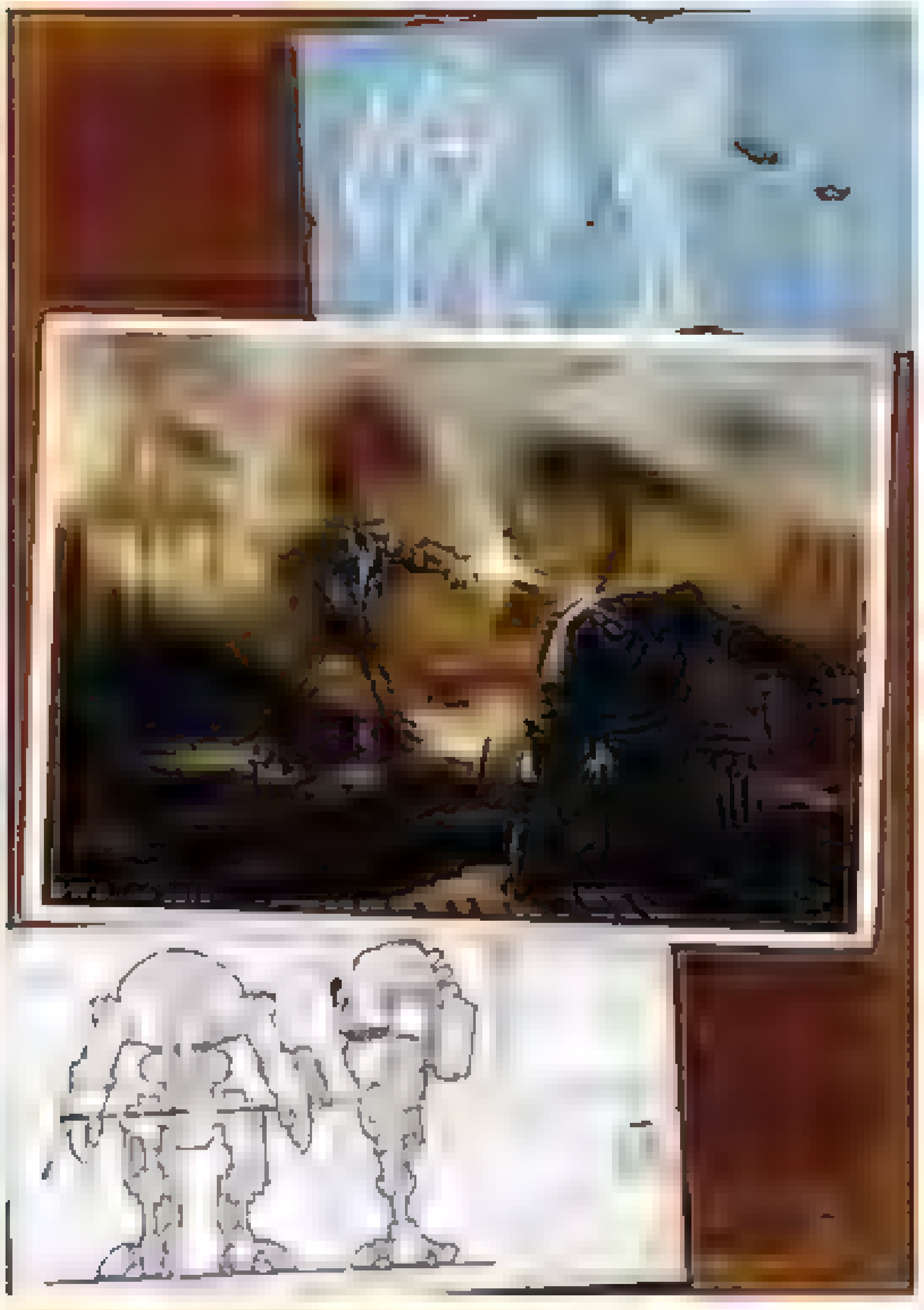


Juan used a personal photograph taken at Canary Wharf for the basis of his image – a technique he has never employed before



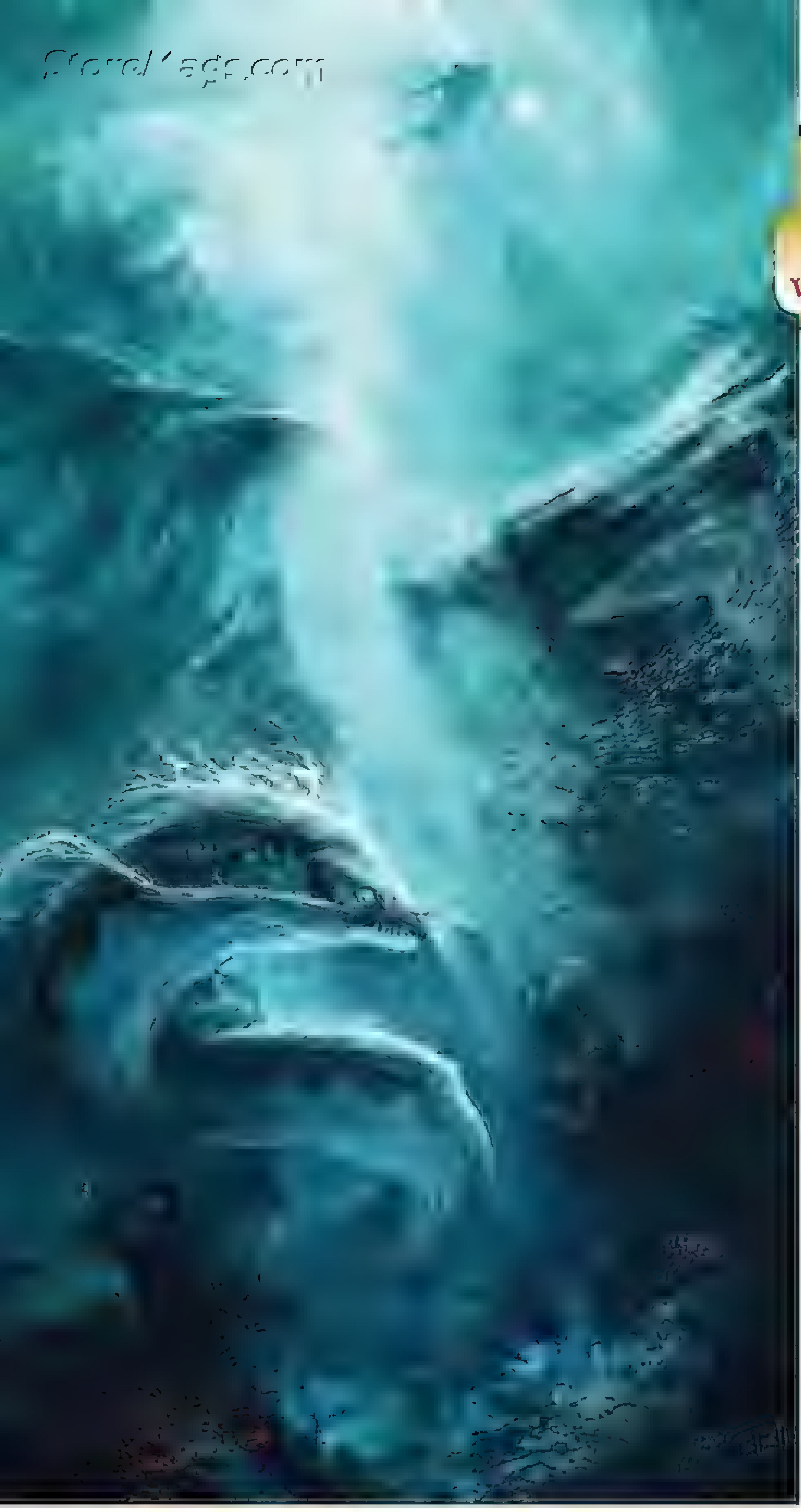
"The final touch-ups are great and really kick this image into gear. Although the main character's anatomy might be a little off, I love the eyes and the various little bits of action."

Join in!
www.imaginefx.com/myfx



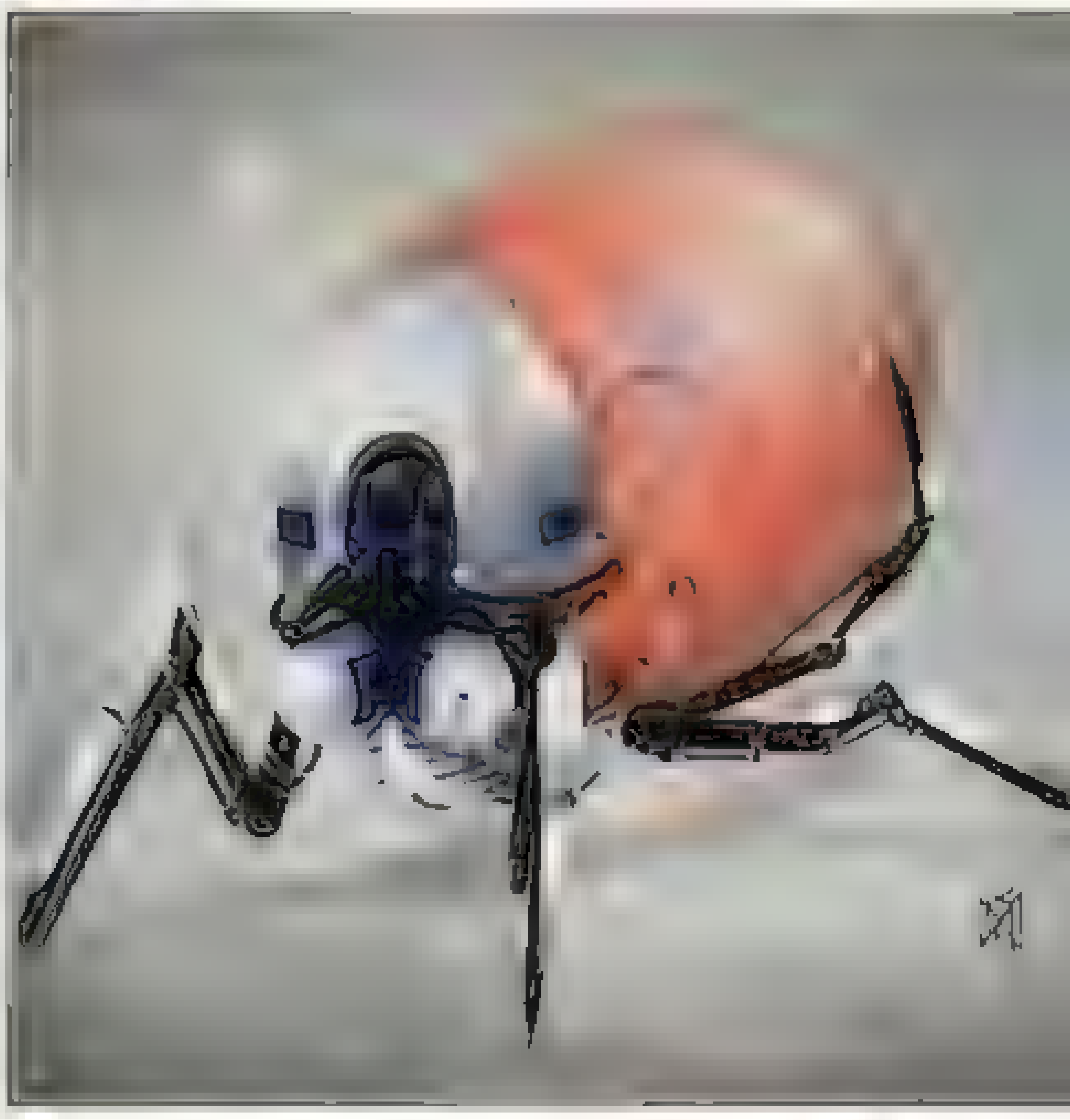
WW2 Power Suits
Thulsadoom (Warren Lee)
imaginefx.com/thulsadoom

"The weekly competitions have been great practice. This was especially fun because it enabled me to use a mixture of skills, including traditional pen and ink, distressed paper for the technical drawing backgrounds, and a digitally painted central image."



Something Fishy This Way Comes
jbcasacop (John Brian Casacop)
imaginefx.com/jbcasacop

"The most enjoyable part of this contest is where I had to imagine a creature that's unnaturally large, yet belongs naturally in the scene. I decided to use lighting to establish my composition and then applied textures and cool hues to set the mood."



Cyber Mom
Marie Deslauriers (aka Heimdayel)
imaginefx.com/heimdayel

"Mass production of humans, as per the brief, was really a disturbing idea so I wanted the design to reflect that it's really a grotesque, perverted version of Maman (Mother), a giant spider sculpture in Ottawa. A blend of humanoid and arachnid elements seemed appropriate."

Do everything faster

Is the daily grind stifling your creativity?

Creativity takes a lot of work. It's a process of evolution, of iteration, of taking original ideas and polishing them until they gleam, and it's a process involving lots of people, lots of change, and lots and lots of data. Keeping on top of everything is a job in itself – which isn't ideal when your job is to do the creative stuff too. If you haven't already moved to a server-based system, you're definitely doing too much.

Everything in its right place

Your data is the hub around which everything else revolves, so it makes sense to keep it in a central location. From image assets to HR records, if it's used by or needs input from more than one person then a server-based system means that everyone can find what they need when they need it.

One of the biggest benefits to storing the data on a central server is that it speeds up workflow. Shared assets are always the most up-to-date versions, and there's no need to wade through endless revisions, trying to work out which particular version of a file is the one that everybody's signed off. Changes are easy to track, comments are easy to share, and revisions are easy to undo when clients or lead creatives change their minds.

It's also a superbly efficient way to maximise resources. Adding extra capacity is effortless with network attached storage (NAS) and equipment can be shared across your entire organisation. And the combination of super-fast processors and 10 Gigabit Ethernet (10GbE) means that you don't waste your most important resource of all: your time.

Herding cats

Workstations plastered with Post-It notes are a sure sign that a business might as well be herding cats: coordinating team tasks and schedules can be incredibly difficult when everybody has their own unique way of staying on top of things. Shared calendars, schedules and milestones can ensure that everybody knows what's happening when – and shared communications ensure that important messages are never missed. And unlike those Post-It notes, your data doesn't become unavailable when the office is locked up for the night or when you're out on the road. Servers never sleep, and they're always available – not just from PCs, but from smartphones too.

Rock solid reliability

Super-connected workplaces aren't just about saving money. They're about saving necks too. If a [illegible] who loses a laptop it could mean the loss of irreplaceable assets or weeks of work – but a connected workplace can defuse [illegible] that every asset is archived, while centralised maintenance and administration ensure that everybody benefits from the latest software updates, system patches and security fixes. By taking the administrative burden away from end users, servers give them the time to shine.

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Dell PowerEdge Servers are designed to work as hard as you do. We work closely with leading Independent Software Vendors (ISVs) to deliver unrivalled performance and reliability in the most demanding environments, and our Dell PowerEdge tower servers and rack servers are built specifically for the most demanding jobs in creative, engineering and architectural design, web design and development, photo editing, finance and product design. With the latest technology in our scalable servers and storage solutions, Dell is the one-source partner to match your IT ambitions.

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Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS

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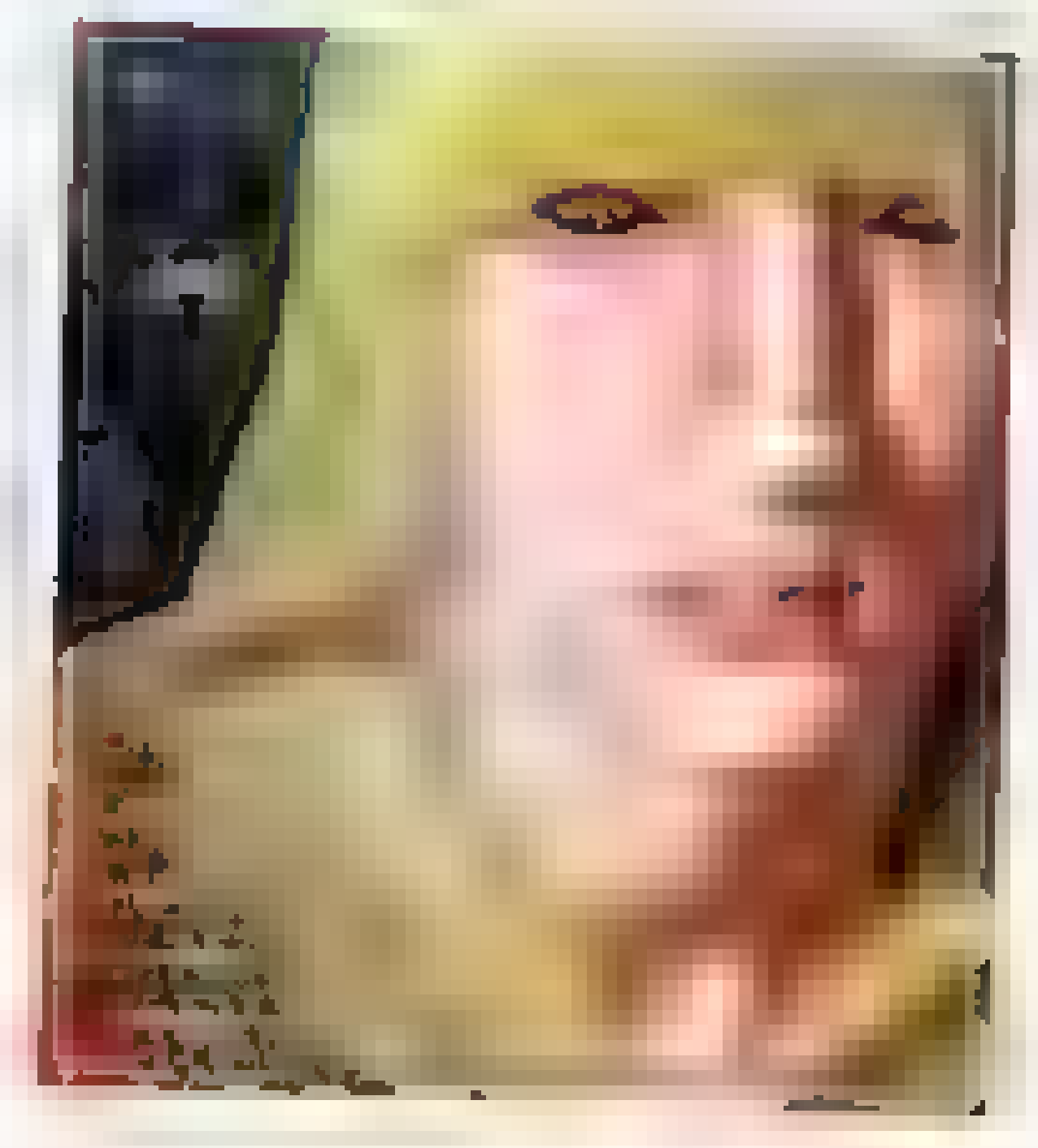
Australia's art revolution will be led by the concepts explained in How to Draw and Paint Anatomy!

A valid career choice



The influence of Frank Frazetta can still be felt, as Aynia can testify.

Your tribute to Frazetta and the picture of Cat Girl in issue 58 brought back many memories and lost dreams of my childhood in Africa. I wanted to thank Frazetta for elevating the genre, but it'll mean the same if I thank ImagineFX because you've truly liberated fantasy art. When reading your magazine, not only do I forget to question the purpose of fantasy art – you really convey it as a valid art form – I'm assured that it's now a viable profession. Although my career path is set (I write rather than draw for a living), you've made me realise that life's too short not to believe in what you love and celebrate art for the sheer pleasure that it brings.

My digital artwork isn't up to scratch yet, but my biggest dream is to learn to draw something worthy of appearing in FXPosé.

Aynia, via email

Claire replies Frank Frazetta's talents were a gift to the world and despite his passing, his art will live on forever. Good luck with your artistic dreams, Anyia.

The importance of anatomy

Your How to Draw & Paint Anatomy special edition is a world treasure! This should be a hardback book with gold edges, this ranks up there with the books of Bridgeman, RB Hale, Burne Hogarth and other classics!

I've been practising as an artist since the late 80s and trained at The Julian Ashton Art School in Sydney. Since then I've worked as an illustrator, fine artist and art teacher and have taught constructive figure drawing, anatomy and painting. For many years I tried to interest government-funded art schools in this amazing subject, but always met with disinterest or patronising post modernism statements about how it's 'just' skill!

Since the early Naughties I've noticed a gradual change in attitude driven by the passion for fantasy and sci-fi in gaming and films, books, anime and manga. I'm now in demand all around Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne teaching concept art, constructional figure drawing and manga, although not in state schools yet!

The brilliant drawings and profound concepts in this Anatomy edition just blow me away. It's the best thing I've seen in many years and will help fuel a revolution in art. I'm serious about this!

Dave Lovegrove, via email

Claire replies Thanks David. High praise indeed! For those of you who missed out on getting a printed version of our anatomy edition never fear – we have a digital edition available here: **bit.ly/ifxanatomy**

[illegible]

We've still got a few copies, but you need to move fast! See page 53 for details on how to get hold of one.

Who, what, where?

As a newer artist, we often focus on improving our skills to the point where we forget to educate ourselves on the people we could be working with! There's a lot of information out there but it's often scattered around, sending you on a wild goose chase.

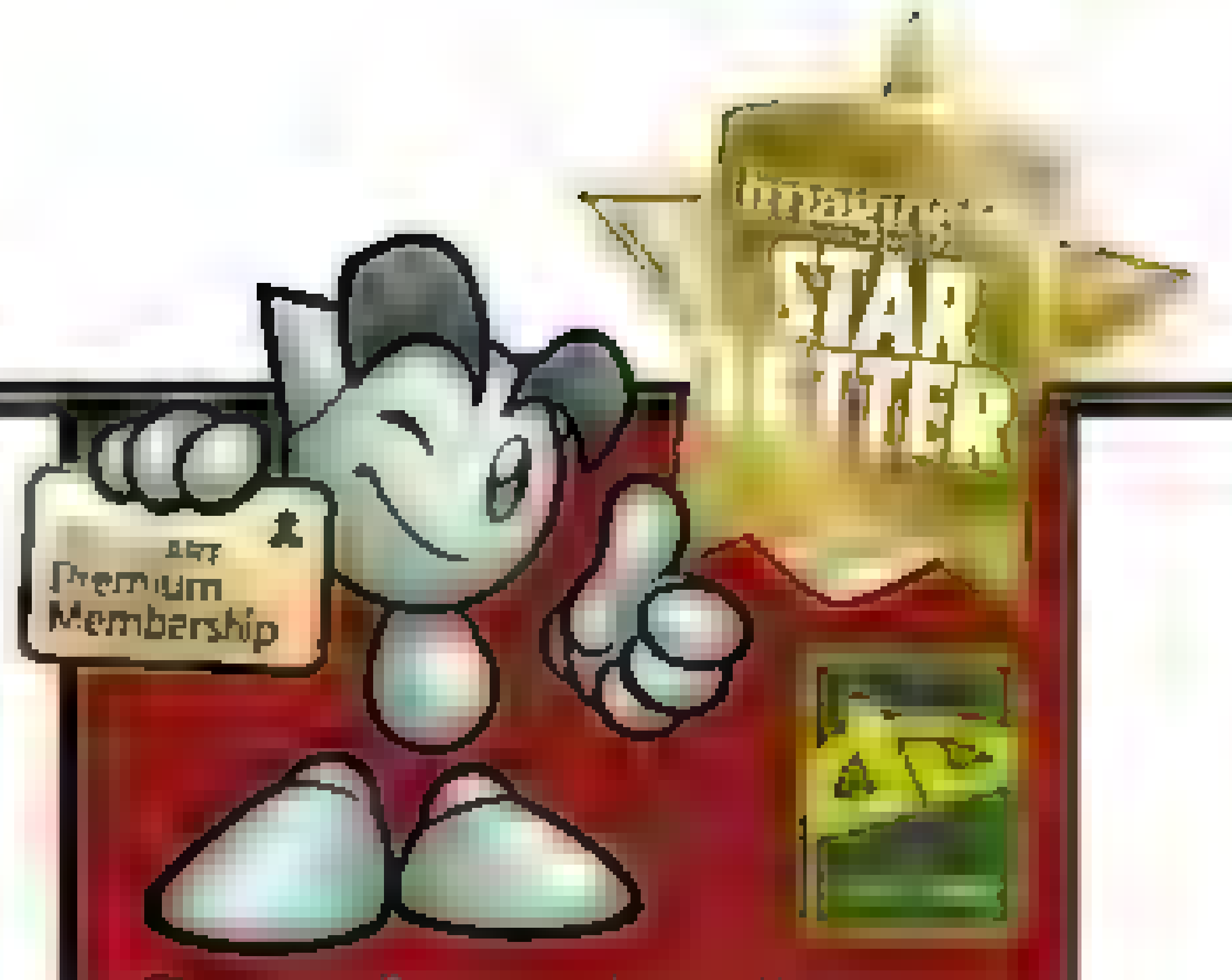
I'd love to see a breakdown of who's who, what companies/art directors get involved with the community and perhaps a company directory? I understand this could be a huge undertaking, given that "the industry" covers many separate industries, but for those of us who often hear ourselves saying, "Who? They did what now?", it would be fantastic to have something to get us started on the right path!

Hannah Kelsall, via email

Claire replies Hello Hannah, we try to give insight into the industry in various ways. We featured Massive Black in issue 72 and we usually have a monthly Studio Profile of game/film development studios, to help people know who's out there. We'll endeavour to publish more features like this in the future.

BACK IN BLACK

Our Studio Profile and industry insight features lift the lid on the commercial side of sci-fi and fantasy art



Our star letter writer wins a dA Premium Membership!

[illegible]

Does my art need a name?

First of all, I must say thank you for a very inspirational magazine. I'm always so excited to read through it each month.

Here's my question: I'm having a little trouble labelling and identifying my art. I know it sounds silly, but bear with me.

I used to paint in acrylics. That was easy; they were acrylic paintings, end of story. But then I gradually moved over to digital art and all of a sudden I found myself caught somewhere in between 3D and 2D. I combine renders from different programs. I create objects in Hexagon and MD2 or use things that I've previously purchased. I render in Vue, Poser, Apophysis and so on. I then put all these elements together in Photoshop and paint additional elements using my Wacom tablet, creating hair, fixing the poser figures, painting details and adding texture from photographs.

But what should I call this? I call it 'fun', because that's what I'm having. On deviantART I refer to it as mixed media, but is this correct? I know mixed media is used to describe a collection of images, paintings, sketches and so on, but could the same term be translated into the digital age? I can't call them 3D images because they're not clean renders, and I can't call them 2D paintings because I only painted part of them. I'm not the only one making this kind of art. But what should I call my art?

Björn Malmberg, via email

Claire replies Interesting point, Björn. The term mixed media is a catch-all term when using various applications to create art, but is it enough? What do other readers think? Do you have trouble naming your art? Should mixed media forms of art be more easily definable, or doesn't it matter? Let me know.

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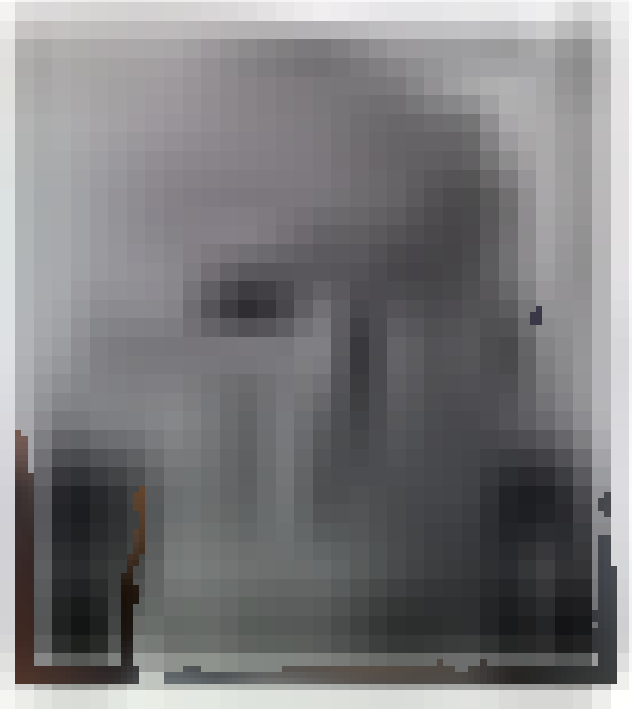
Turn to page 107

Artists' opinions

"ImagineFX is the best published source of conceptual art information that I have ever seen. The magazine is a must-have investment for any aspiring concept artist who wants to take their skills to the next level."
Andrew Jones, concept artist



"ImagineFX is a unique resource for the science-fiction and fantasy community. It has invaluable tips and techniques for a range of software, and encourages aspiring artists to get their work in print and receive international exposure."
Jonny Duddle, freelance artist

LIVE IN THE US/CANADA? TURN TO PAGE 95

Artist Q&A

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The ImagineFX panel

Daarken

US-based Daarken has worked with clients such as Blizzard, Wizards of the Coast, Fantasy Flight Games, Trion, Big Huge Games and Hondo.

daarken.com

Raymond Swanland

Raymond is a freelance illustrator working on everything from books to comics to video games and film design.

raymondswanland.com

Paco Rico Torres

Paco is a freelance illustrator living in Spain who's painted for several card games, magazines, books and role-playing games.

pacorico.blogspot.com

Matt Dixon

Matt first created artwork for a video game back in 1988 and has since worked for [illegible]. His pin-up art can be seen in his book Girls On Top.

mattdixon.co.uk

Brynn Metheney

Brynn was raised in the Mojave desert and moved to the Bay Area in 2006. Creature and animal illustrations are her forte.

brynnart.com

Justin Gerard

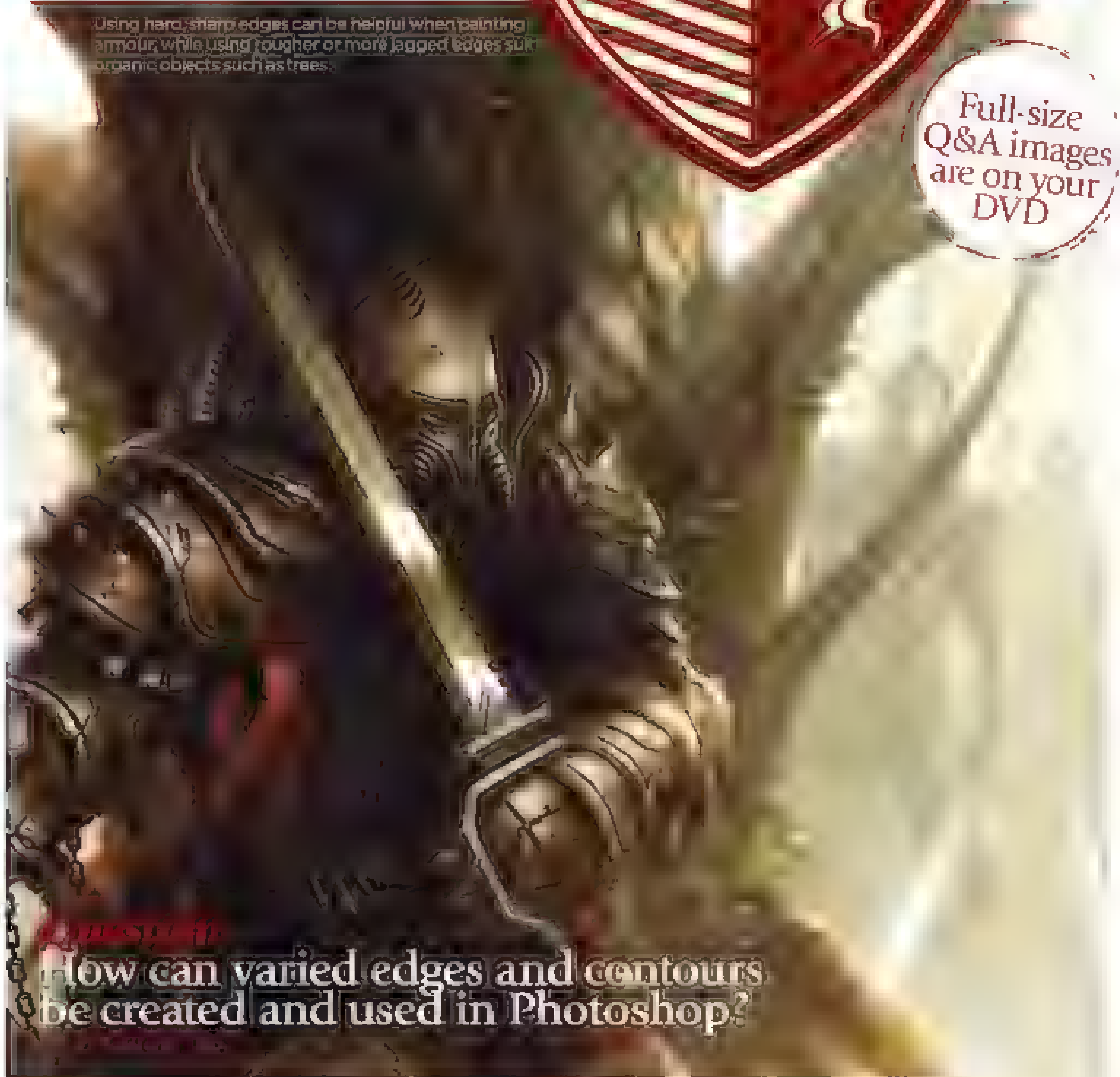
Justin constantly searches the world for the perfect medium to paint in. He hasn't found it, but he's met some great people along the way.

justingerard.com

Remko Troost

Born in Amsterdam, Remko is a senior concept artist and illustrator with several years' experience in the film and video game industries.

remkotroost.com



Using hard, sharp edges can be helpful when painting armour, while using rougher or more jagged edges suit organic objects such as trees.

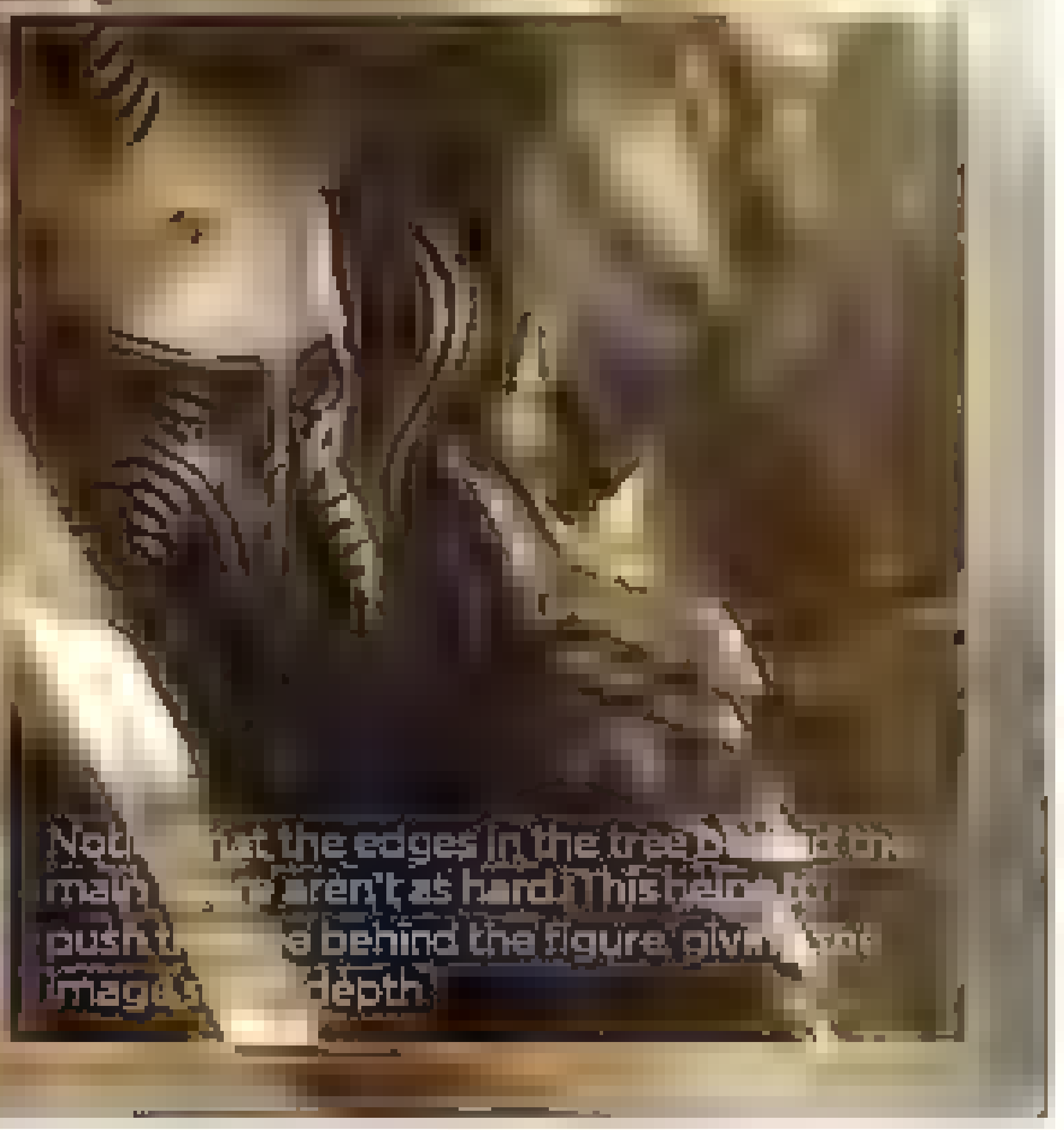
Question

How can varied edges and contours be created and used in Photoshop?

Daarken replies

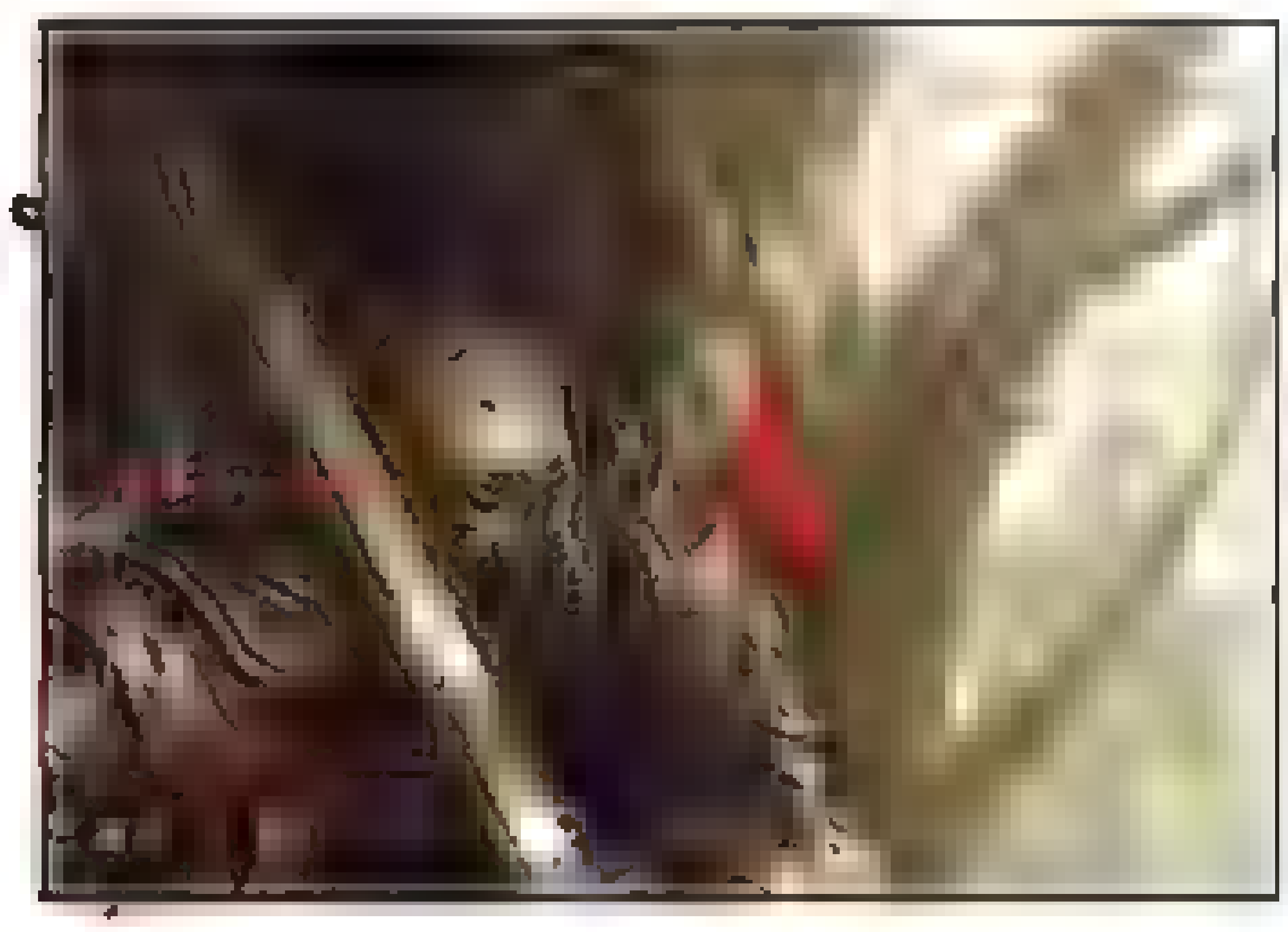
Edges give an image variety and a sense of realism, especially with a mixture of hard and soft edges. Creating varied edges can be done in several ways using Photoshop. The most common method is to use different brushes or to take advantage of pressure sensitivity. Most of the time I just use the default Round brush, but when I want to get some rough edges I switch to a Chalk brush. For soft edges I switch to either the Airbrush or something like the Cloud brush. Another way to produce hard edges is by using the Marquee tool or brushes that have 100 per cent opacity.

Mixed edges can help direct the viewer's eye, because people are usually drawn to areas that are in focus. Experiment with your edges to ensure your images have focus and realism.

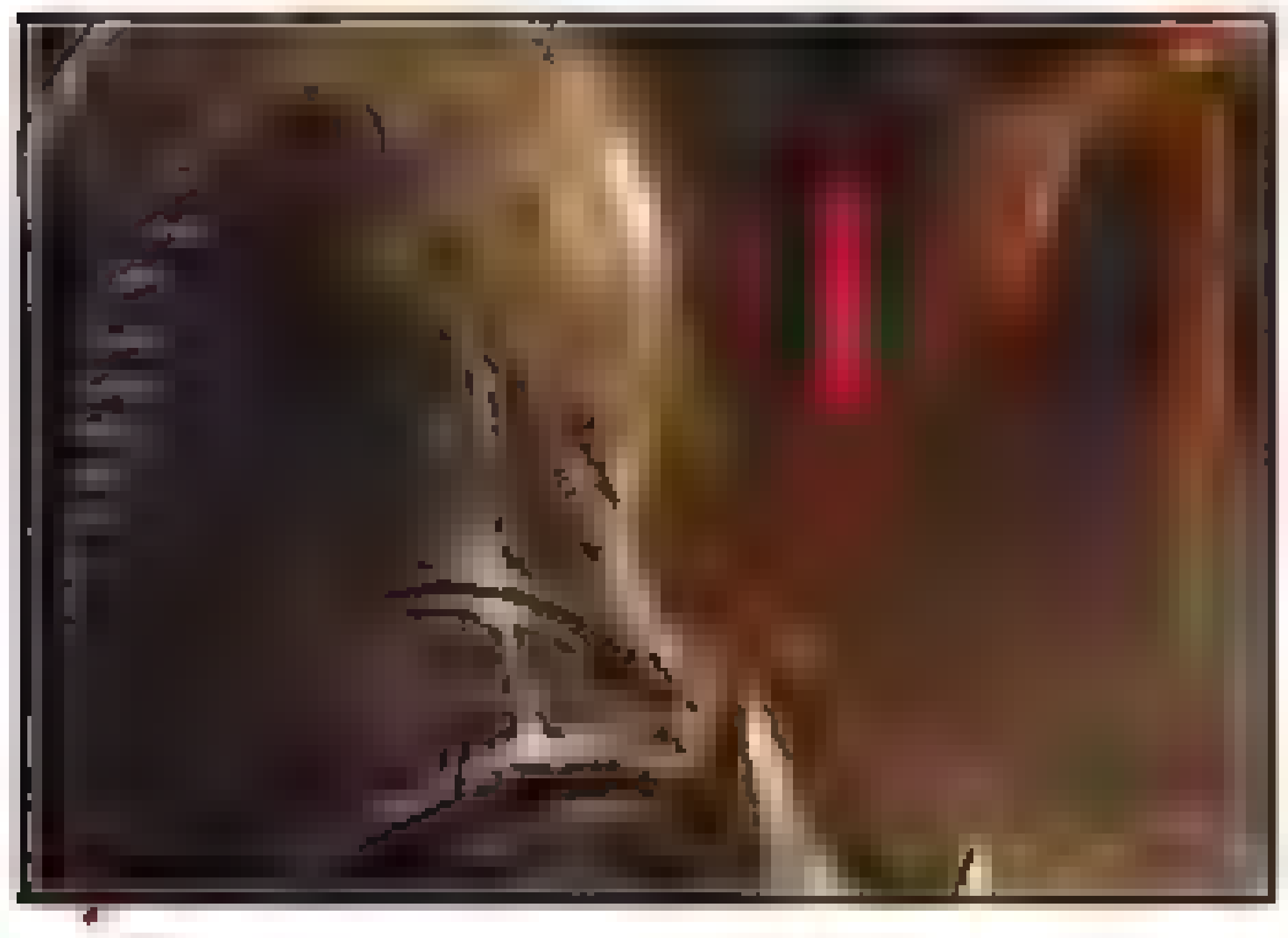


Notice that the edges in the tree behind the main figure aren't as hard. This helps to push the tree behind the figure, giving the image some depth.

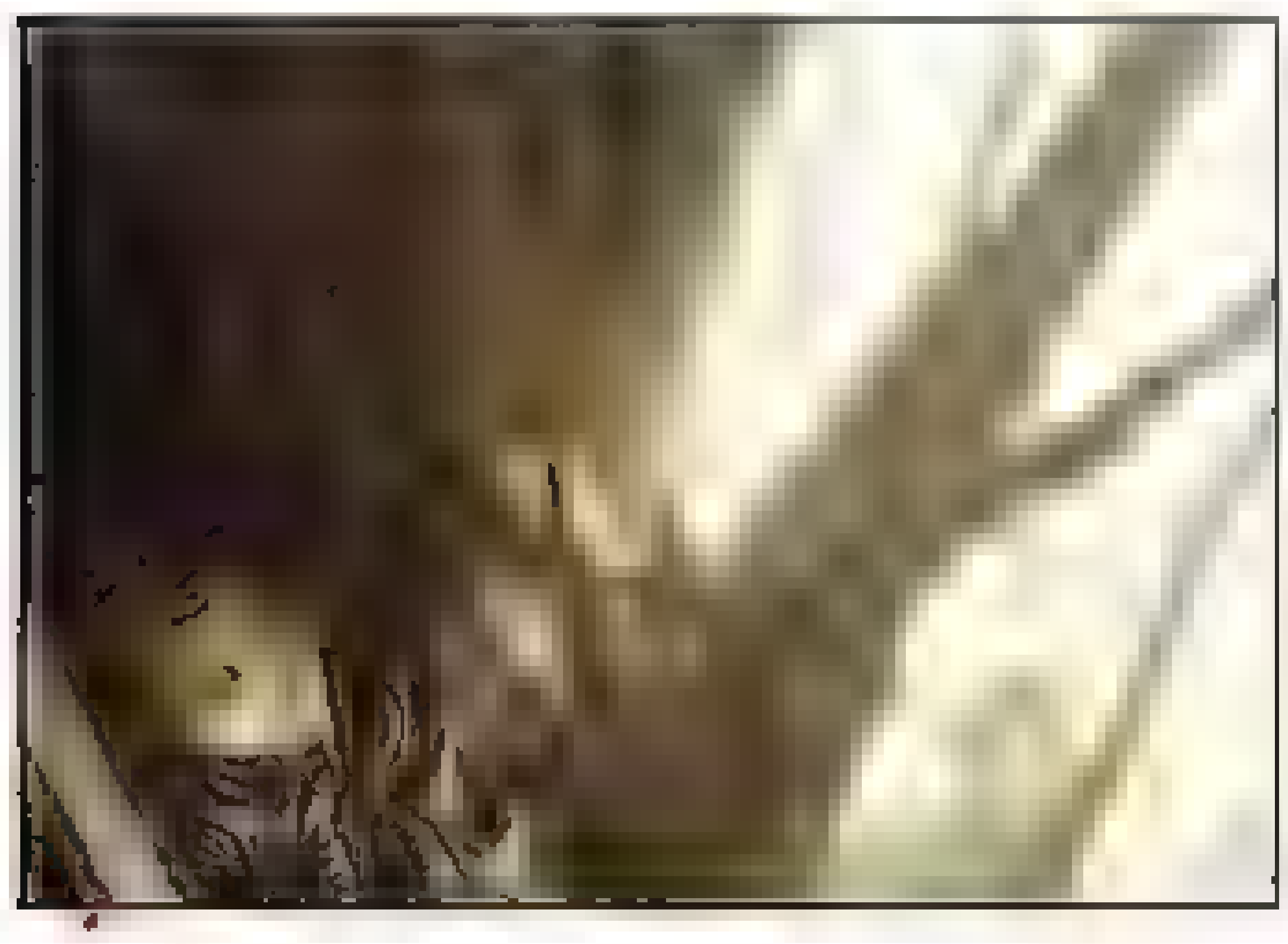
Step-by-step: Simple ways to achieve varied edges



1. Typically I use a Chalk brush when painting trees or armour that's old and damaged. Tree bark isn't usually smooth and sharp, so using a Chalk brush can help give you that sense of texture. Making armour very rough in some areas can help give it a bit of realism and imply that this person has been through many battles.

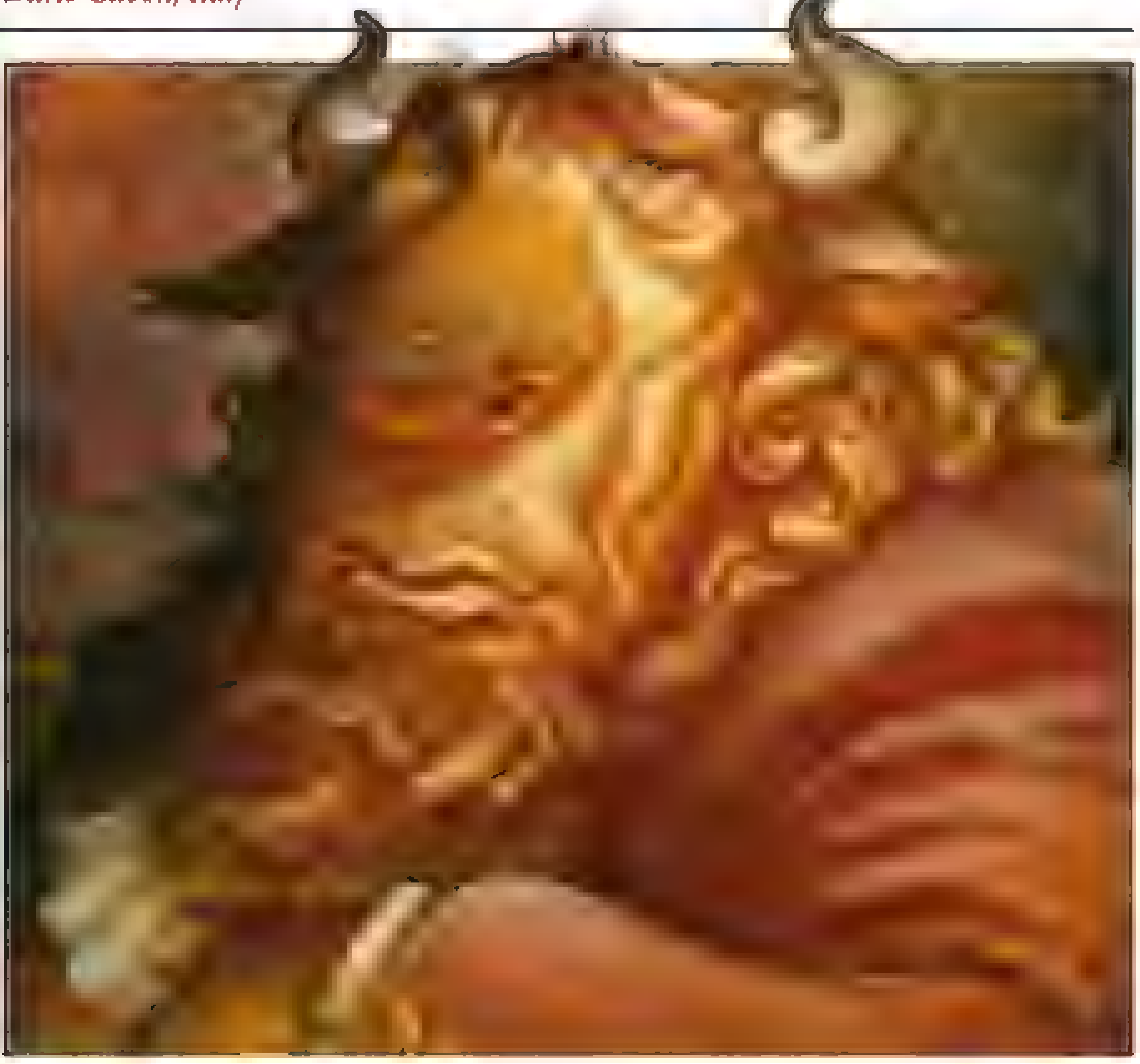


2. Painting foreground figures can be tricky because when things are closer to you they're more detailed and sharper as opposed to objects that are further away. I don't want to bring too much attention to the foreground character because he isn't the focal point, so I use a Chalk brush and keep him fairly loose.



3. Another way to get sharper edges is to use the Marquee tool, I often apply this tool when painting trees in the background. Mountains are usually well-defined objects, so it helps to have the Marquee tool at your disposal. Simply select the area and, while it's selected, paint inside the selection.

Question
How do I keep the textures in my traditional underpainting when painting in Photoshop?
Dario Gabon, Italy



The completed image in Photoshop, using layers to ensure the original painting's texture remains true and visible

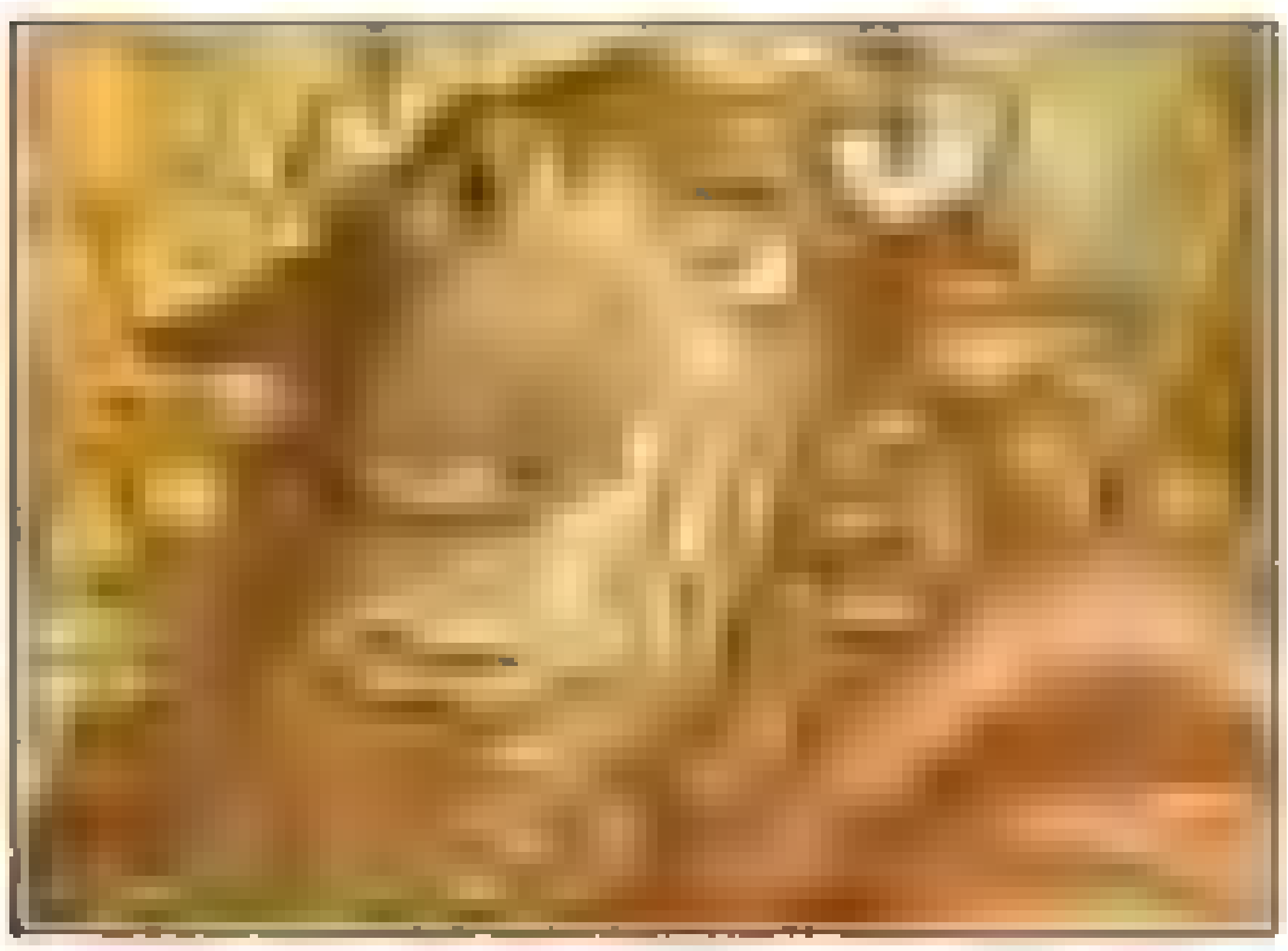
Answer
Justin replies

Overcoming the digital look of using software such as Photoshop can be made much easier by using original, traditionally created art as the basis for the image. But to avoid losing the feel of the original sketch, to preserve the texture of a traditional underpainting once taken into Photoshop, it's essential that you use the correct layer modes.

Once the art is scanned into Photoshop, I create a new layer over my underpainting layer and set the mode to one of the following: Multiply, Color or Linear Burn, Color or Linear Dodge, Overlay, Soft or Linear Light, Hue or Color. These layer types don't tend to obscure or flatten the surface in the same way that painting on a Normal mode layer would. As a result you end up protecting the texture of the original painting.

I usually work in Multiply, because I find that this is the most predictable and versatile of the bunch. I use the Burn and Linear modes sparingly, if at all, because they have a tendency to ramp up the texture too severely. I tend to work in dozens and sometimes hundreds of layers in an attempt to achieve subtle lighting effects with these layer modes.

Experiment with the layer modes in Photoshop and discover how they each affect the painting below, and in time you'll discover the combination that works best for your art.

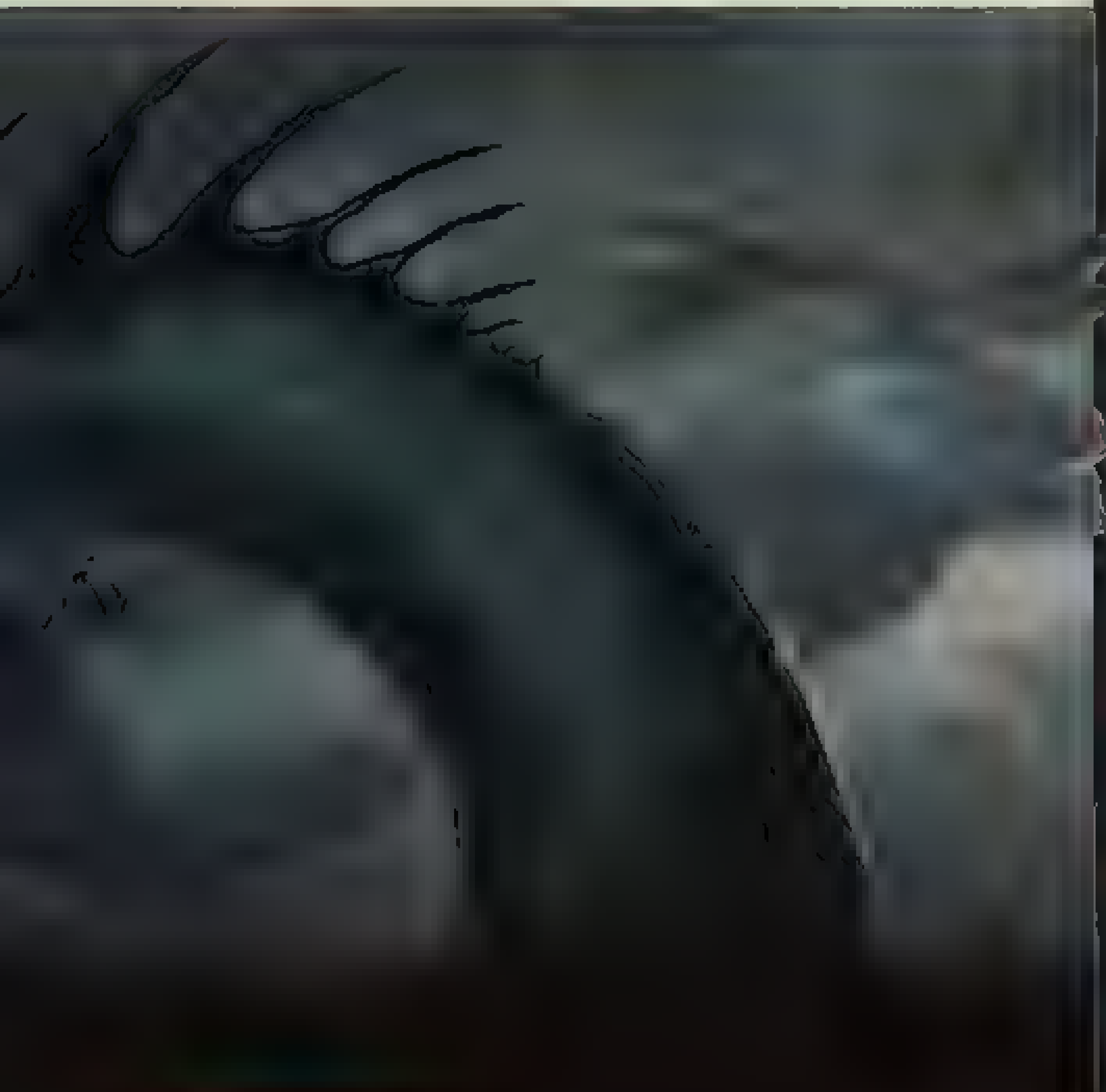


Here's the original underpainting. I want to keep all those rough, sketchy lines by using layers

Artist's secret
REVERSE PROCESS

[illegible]

Question
I'm having trouble painting a dragon's curly neck. Help!
Kendall Stacey, Scotland



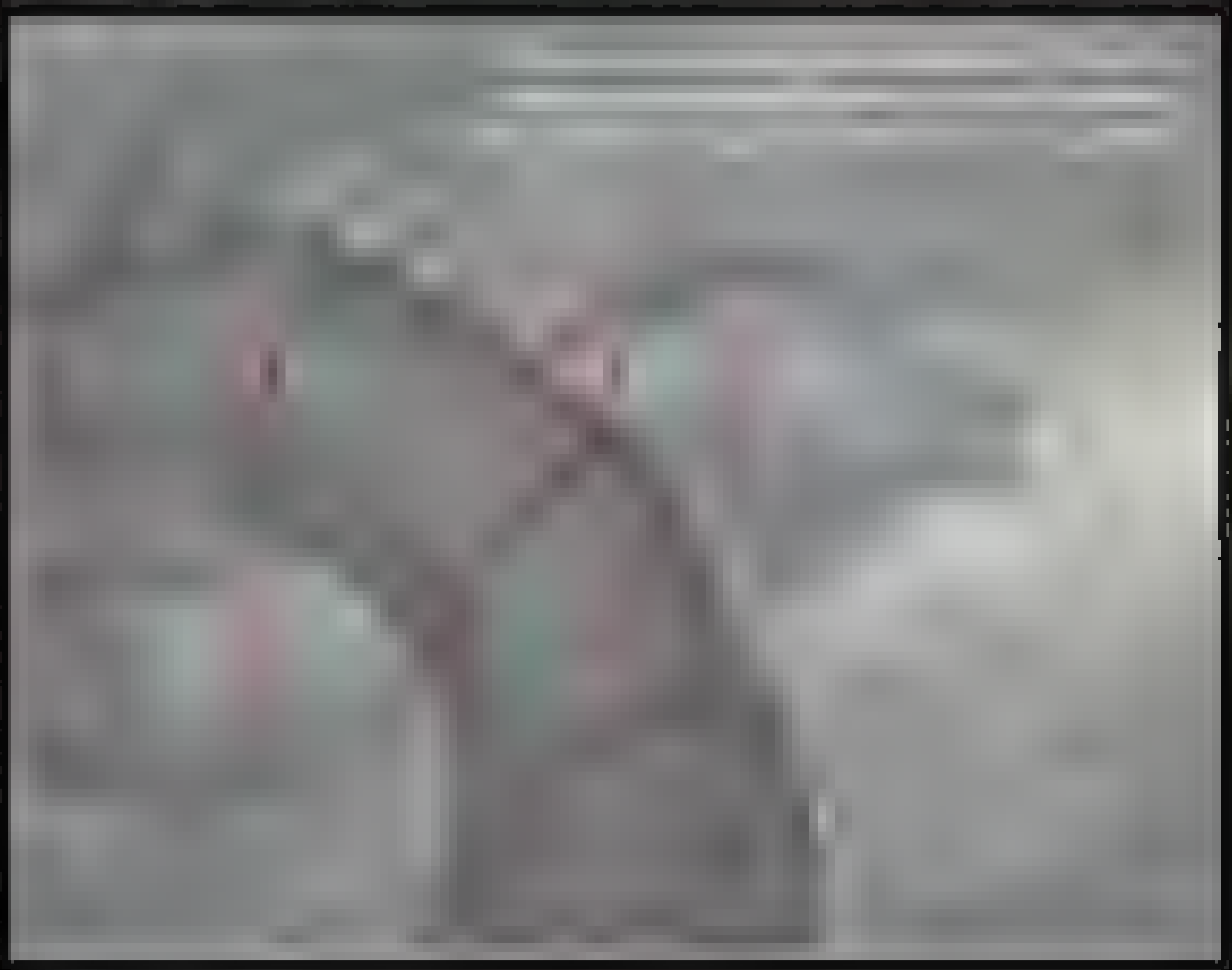
Answer
Brynn replies

A dragon's curly neck can certainly be tricky to get right. It should look flexible, but not to the point of appearing too flimsy. One way to approach this would be to study snakes, because they offer a realistic example of what a long neck might be capable of.

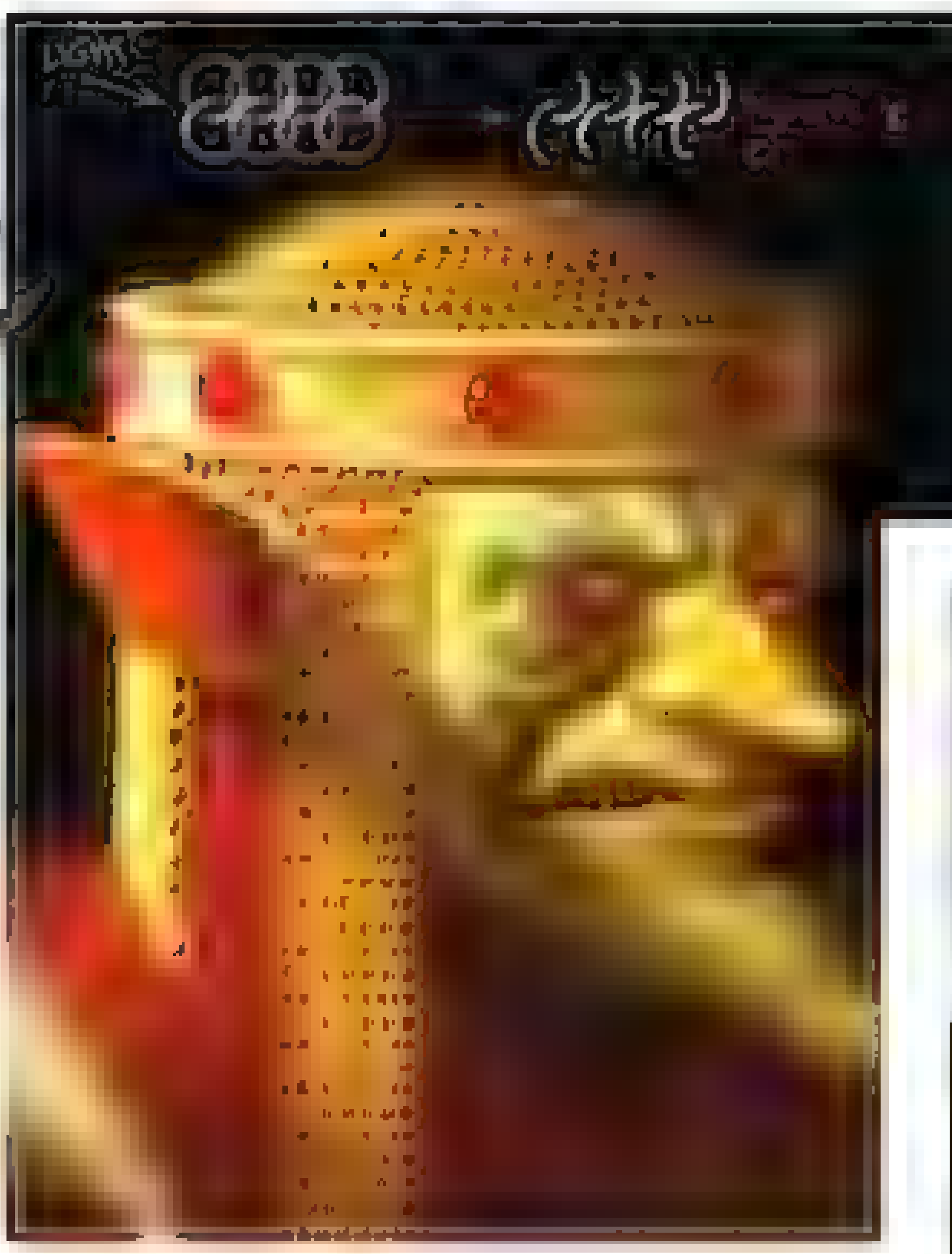
Start by roughing in a quick gesture sketch, where the spine of the dragon would lie in the image: a simple, curled line will do. Imagine the neck as a hose or long cylinder. Laying down your brush strokes in this direction will help and will also introduce volume in the image.

Another thing to consider is overlapping. Putting part of your dragon's neck in front of, or behind, the rest will give the image some depth and aid in making the neck look flexible. Atmospheric perspective helps push back any part of the neck that's behind the rest of the dragon in my image.

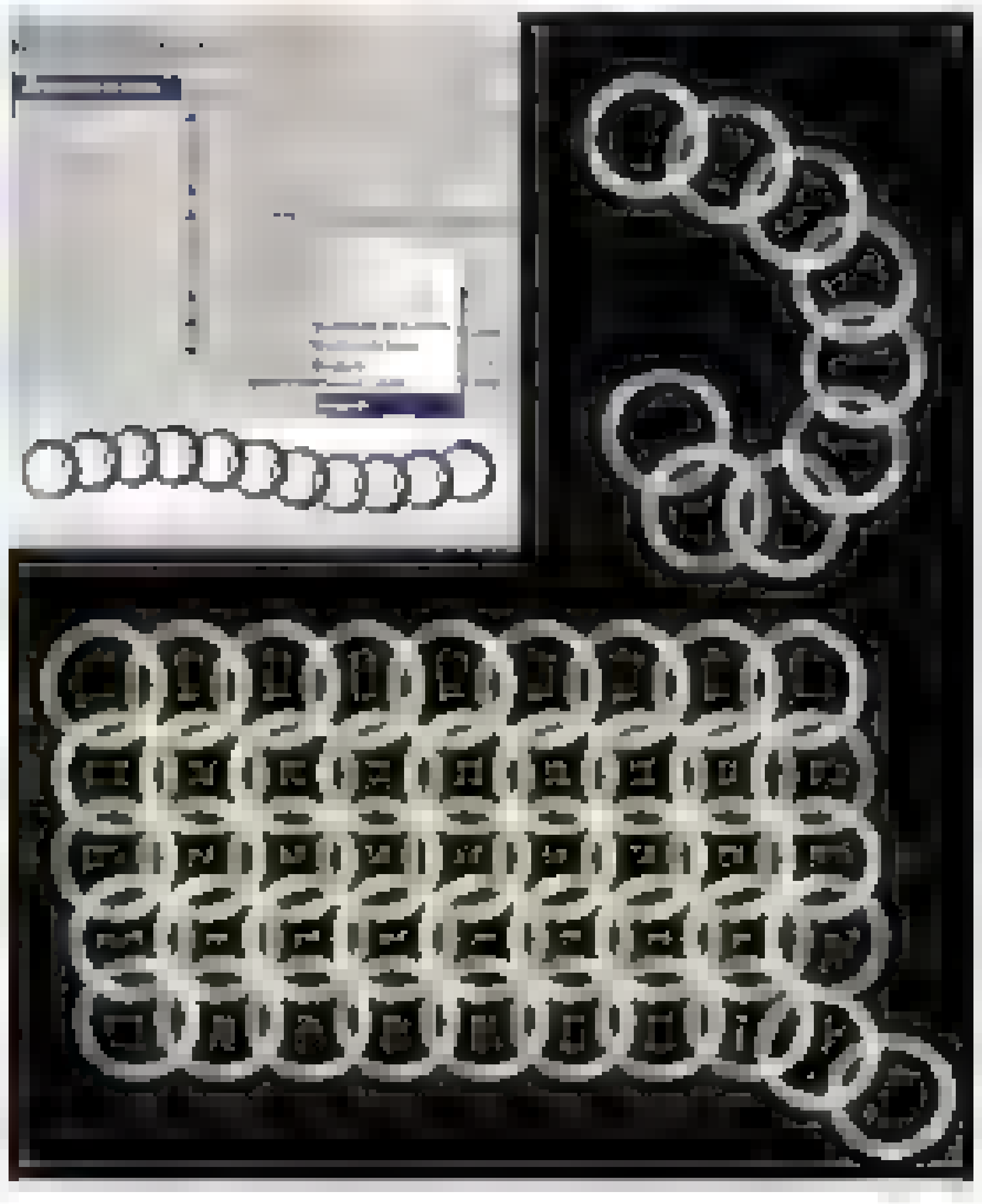
Using real-world references to paint fantasy creatures is essential to ensuring your design feels like it's a living, breathing animal. Have fun!



Question
Is there an easy way to paint golden, chain mail armour?
Rachel Hodgeson, US



Pay attention to how the perspective and the light affect the rings of the chain mail.



This chain mail brush is ideal for painting a frontal view of the armour, but isn't so good for perspective views.

Answer
Paco replies

First, bear in mind that a piece of chain mail is just a collection of small metal rings linked together. Usually the easiest way to paint it is by putting together rows of 'Cs' and inverted 'Cs'. These Cs represent the illuminated areas of every single ring.

It's pretty tiresome painting individual 'Cs' over a character, so one way to speed up the process of painting the metal rings is to create a custom brush shaped as a ring with two different opacities and the angle jitter controlled by direction. This brush won't give you a finished look – you'll have to paint a little more – but it helps. Remember that the chain mail is also affected by perspective, so pay attention to that detail.

You can easily make the chain mail look like gold by using a ochre base and painting in further layers over the lighted areas with orange in a soft light mode, and with light yellow in Overlay mode over the shiny parts.

Question
How can I give my blasts of fiery dragon breath mass and momentum?
Kristy Jones, US

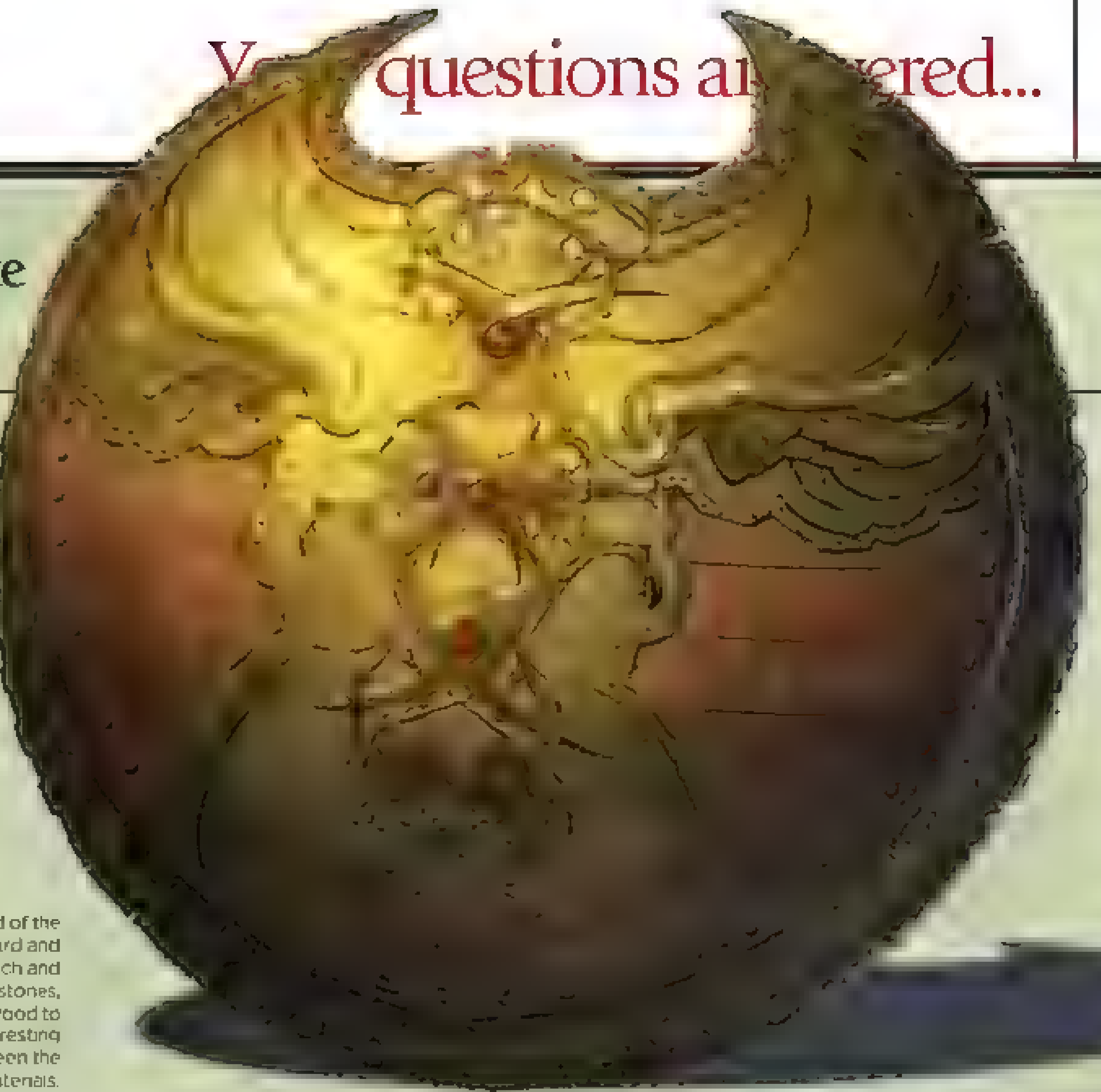
Answer
Raymond replies

My approach to creating convincing and dynamic blasts of dragon fire is to simply focus on all the elements of the fire that emphasise its intensity. The brightness, heat, directional speed and scale all add up to make a truly monstrous blast from a classic fantasy monster. The inherent challenge of depicting movement and luminosity in a still image calls for a slight exaggeration in some visual elements, to really draw attention to the laws of physics – and sometimes magic, of course – at work.

The power of a painting – and not necessarily one that depicts a fantastical scene – is that it doesn't need to adhere precisely to reality the way a photograph does. In this case, I believe that it's more effective to sculpt the form of the dragon's fiery breath with some stylisation that describes its motion. The visual motifs of my stylisation draw from other natural forces, such as extreme weather or volcanic activity, to add believable and archetypal power to the fire. Finding the balance between realistic rendering and the suggestion of movement is the key.

Question
How do I quickly add ornate designs onto a shield?

Marlon Humberstone, England



This is a shield of the King's Royal Guard and want it to look rich and ornate. I use stones, metal and wood to create an interesting contrast between the various materials.

Answer
Remko replies

For generating ornate designs I first create decorative brushes. To do this I use the Pen tool or the Lasso tool and then with black on a white background I start drawing. For this example it's art deco-like patterns. I often just draw the half or a quarter of these and then mirror them on a new layer to make clean symmetrical shapes.

Next I go to Edit>Define Brush Preset and make a custom brush from my pattern. In the case of this shield I just draw the basic form of my object, then put in the light and shadows to make it feel solid.

There are all kinds of shapes of shields and it's fun to play with their form. For example, you could create holes in the shield's upper part so the person behind can still see what's in front of him. An easy way to create attractive shapes is to draw one half of it and then mirror it. Once done, on a new layer above the shield drawing I take my new custom brushes with the decorative shapes and create the ornate designs in the same colour as the shield.

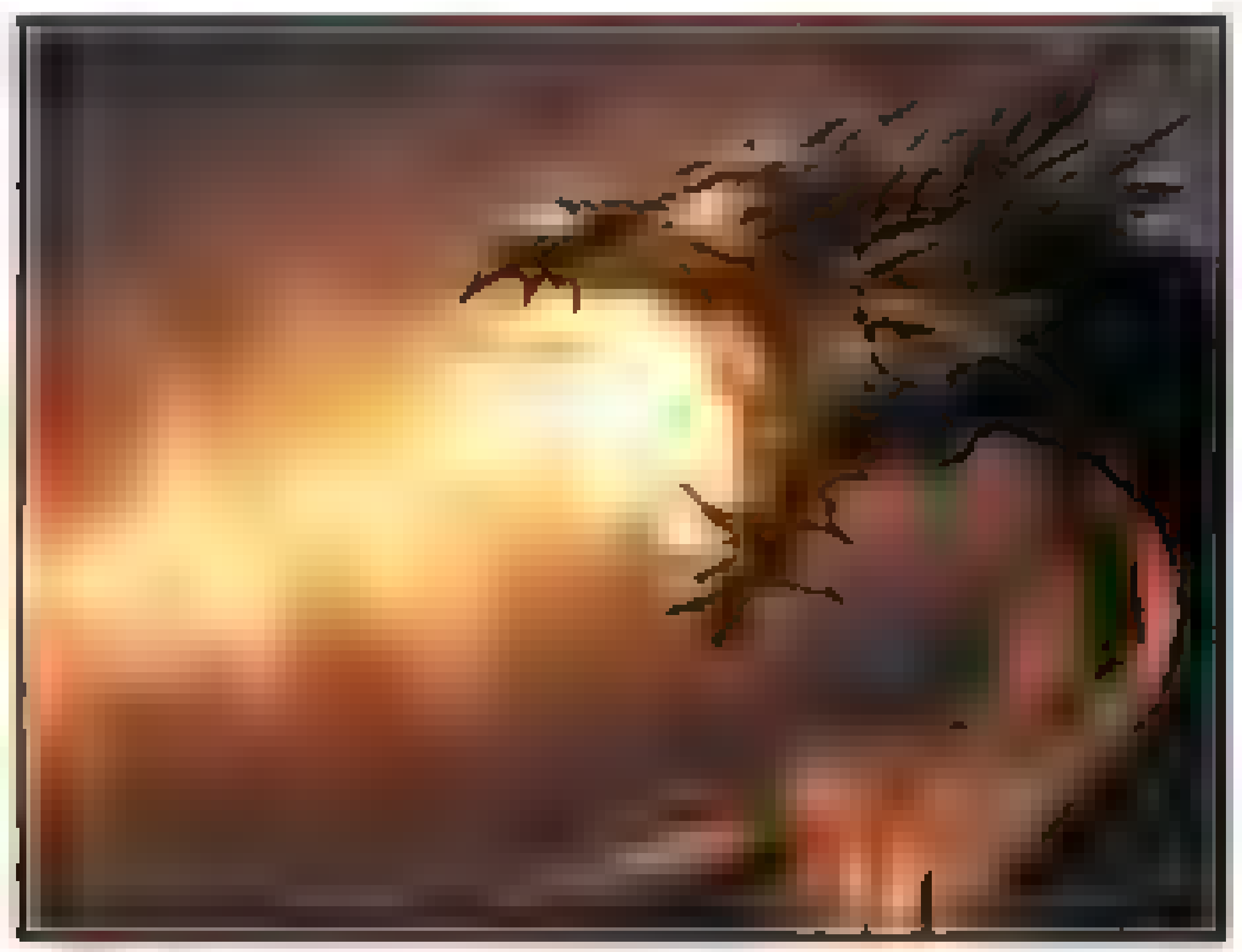
To create volume easily on these shapes I use Bevel and Emboss and set the light and shadow tones inside this window so they fit the colour of my shield. The problem with Bevel and Emboss is that the light acts the same all over the object. To make it feel more natural I drop all my layers and then hand-paint highlights and adjust the shadows so they adapt to my overall light setting.

Now, still with my decorative-shaped brushes, I create ornate borders and finally I bring in some wood to create contrast between the materials on the shield. Finally, I put a metal texture layer above it all and put the layer in Overlay mode. Then I use the Transform Warp tool to manipulate this texture – it will follow the shield's form, so it looks less flat. Finally, with a Basic Round brush set to 100 per cent opacity and pen pressure turned on, I add some more highlights and the last few details.

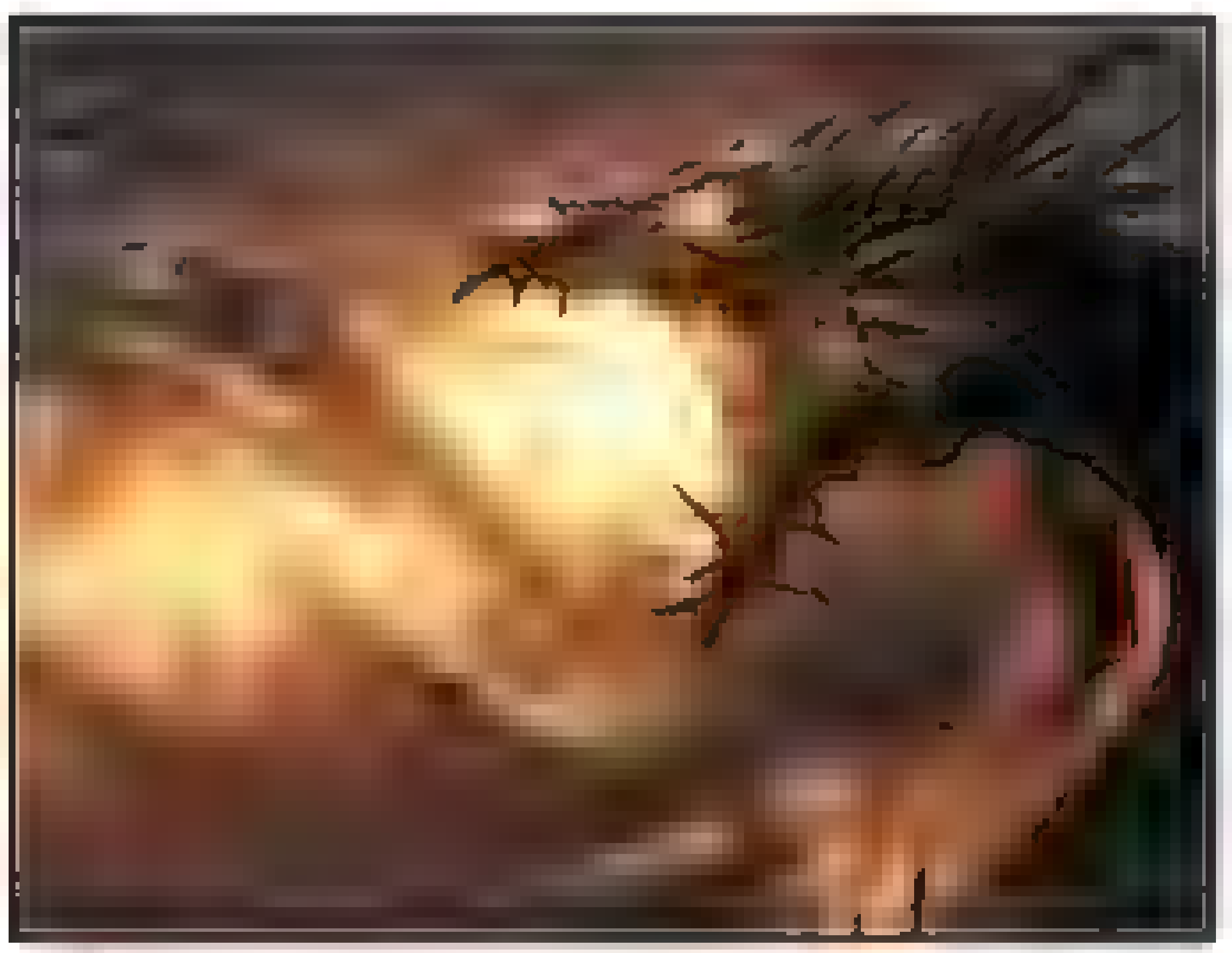
Artist's secret
KEEP TRACK OF YOUR VALUES

[illegible]

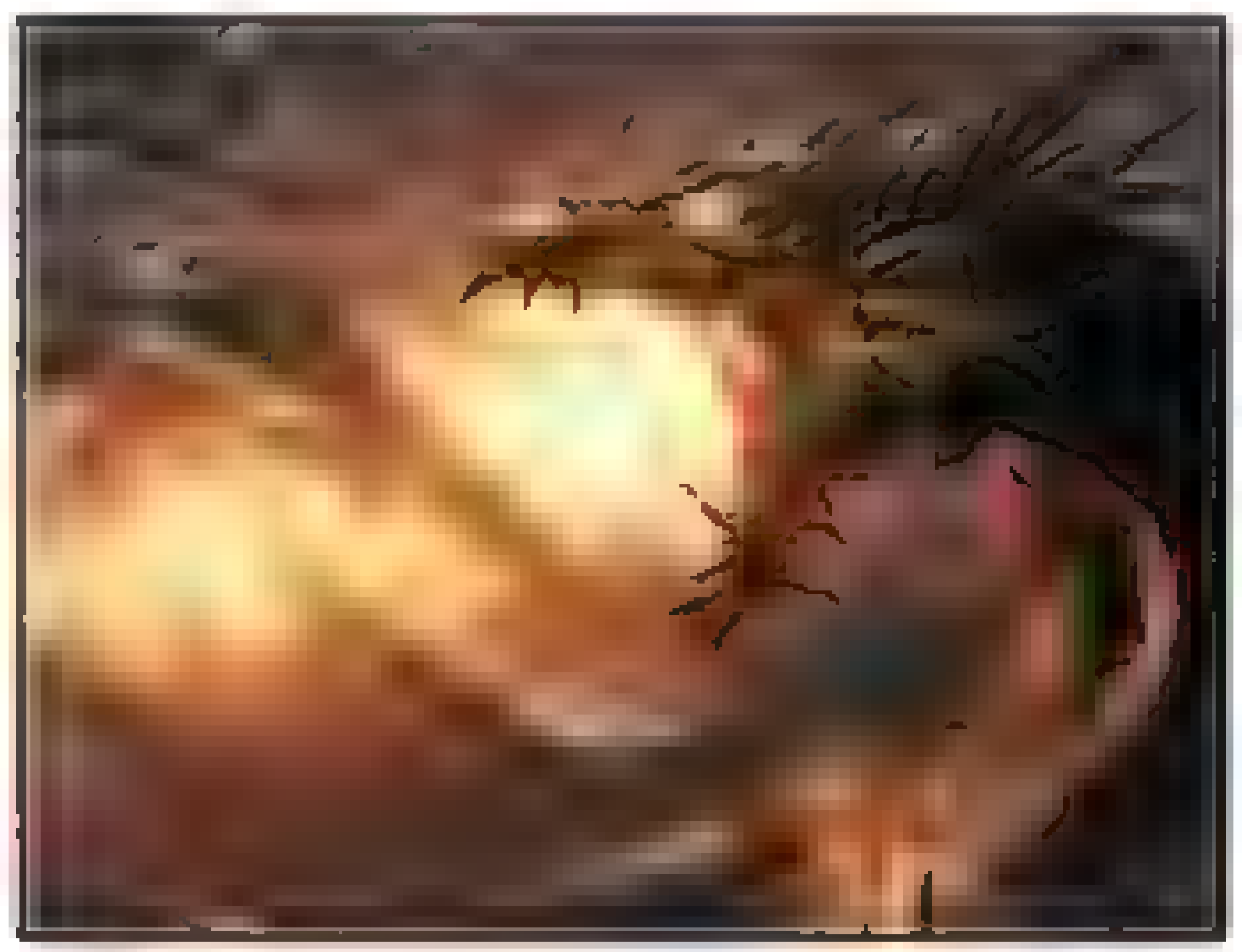
Step-by-step: Painting fiery dragon's breath



① I paint the gradient of colour from the hotspot in the throat to the hot reds at the blast's edges. The fire's luminous quality is shown by reflecting the light off the dragon's face and neck. I emphasise the brightness by having the light bleeding through the skin around the mouth.



② Billowing trails of smoke show the direction and the three-dimensional quality of the blast. The smoke that wraps around the column of fire is reminiscent of a tornado. It's important to remember that the size of the round pillows of smoke gives the fire and the dragon their scale.



③ I add the sparks and embers that are caught up in the turbulent air flowing around the blast. This brings out the depth from the background, all the way to the extreme foreground. Even the occasional scale breaking off can emphasise the raw energy of the dragon's fiery breath.

Question

I'm having trouble painting old, gnarled bark. How would you go about it?

Jessie Hale, Canada

Answer

Matt replies

With a smile on my face! Heavily textured surfaces such as bark can be enormous fun to paint, although their complexity can pose problems. The trick is to tackle the material in logical steps, dealing with each aspect of the surface separately. To do this effectively, consider the various attributes of the material you wish to paint and identify the important elements. A little time spent studying reference images can be helpful here.

The primary property of gnarled bark is dramatic surface relief, so this will be the most important element in painting a convincing texture. In common with many natural surfaces, bark can also show a degree of colour variance; this is something that's frequently overlooked when painting surfaces, but is an important aspect because it helps to provide surface depth and visual appeal. Finally, consider that much of the interest in the surface of gnarled bark comes from age, from character built up from years of weathering. Small details that give a sense of history to a material can help to sell it to the viewer. Moss, fungus or holes from burrowing insects are obvious choices for bark, but you could just as easily add blood stains, strange carvings, scars from weapon blows and so on. How interesting do you want your material to be?

The same steps can be followed to simplify the rendering of any complex material. Try the same method to paint a weathered rock formation, rusted iron gates or a pimpled goblin buttock!

Artist's secret

BRUSH STRATEGY

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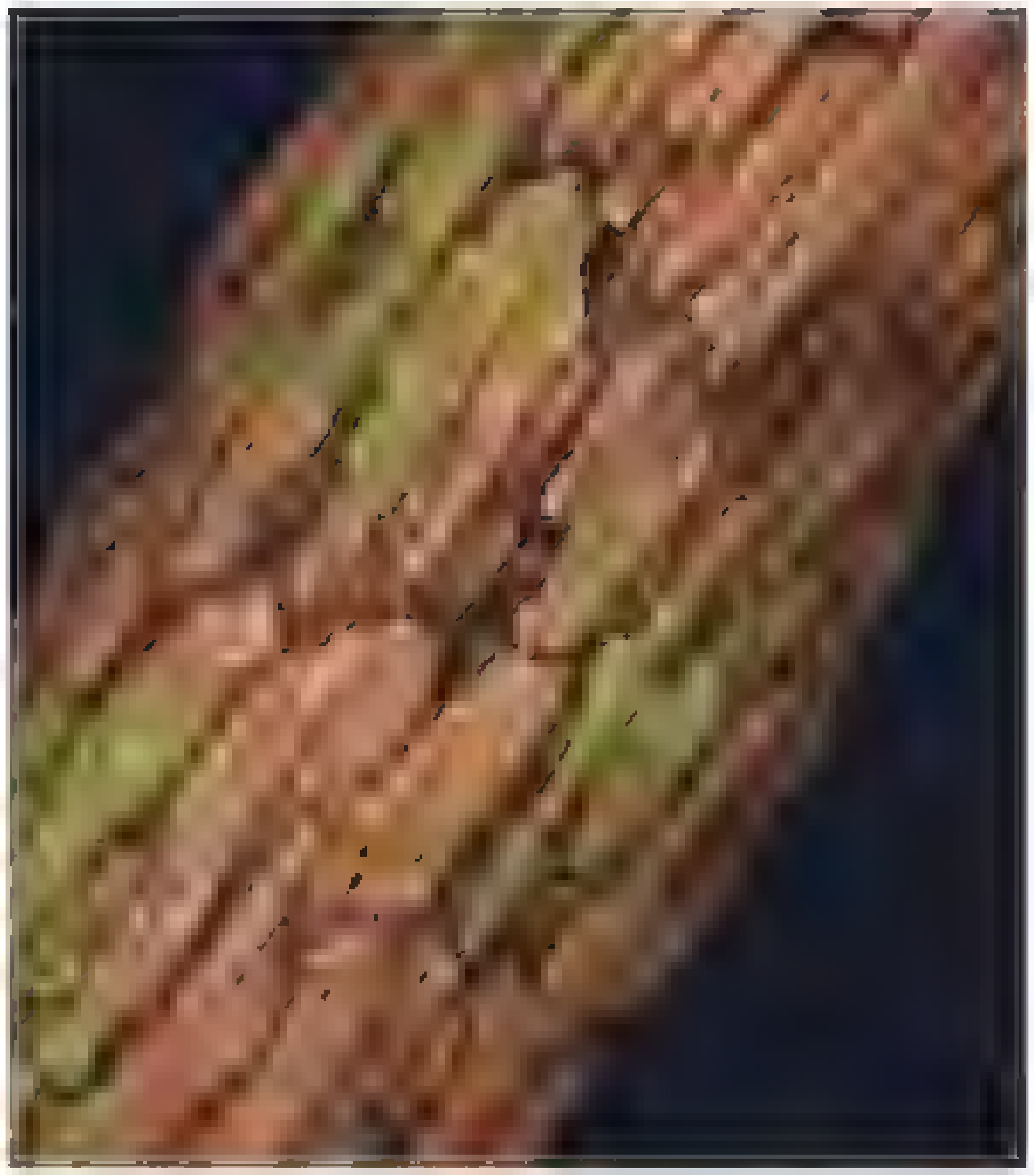
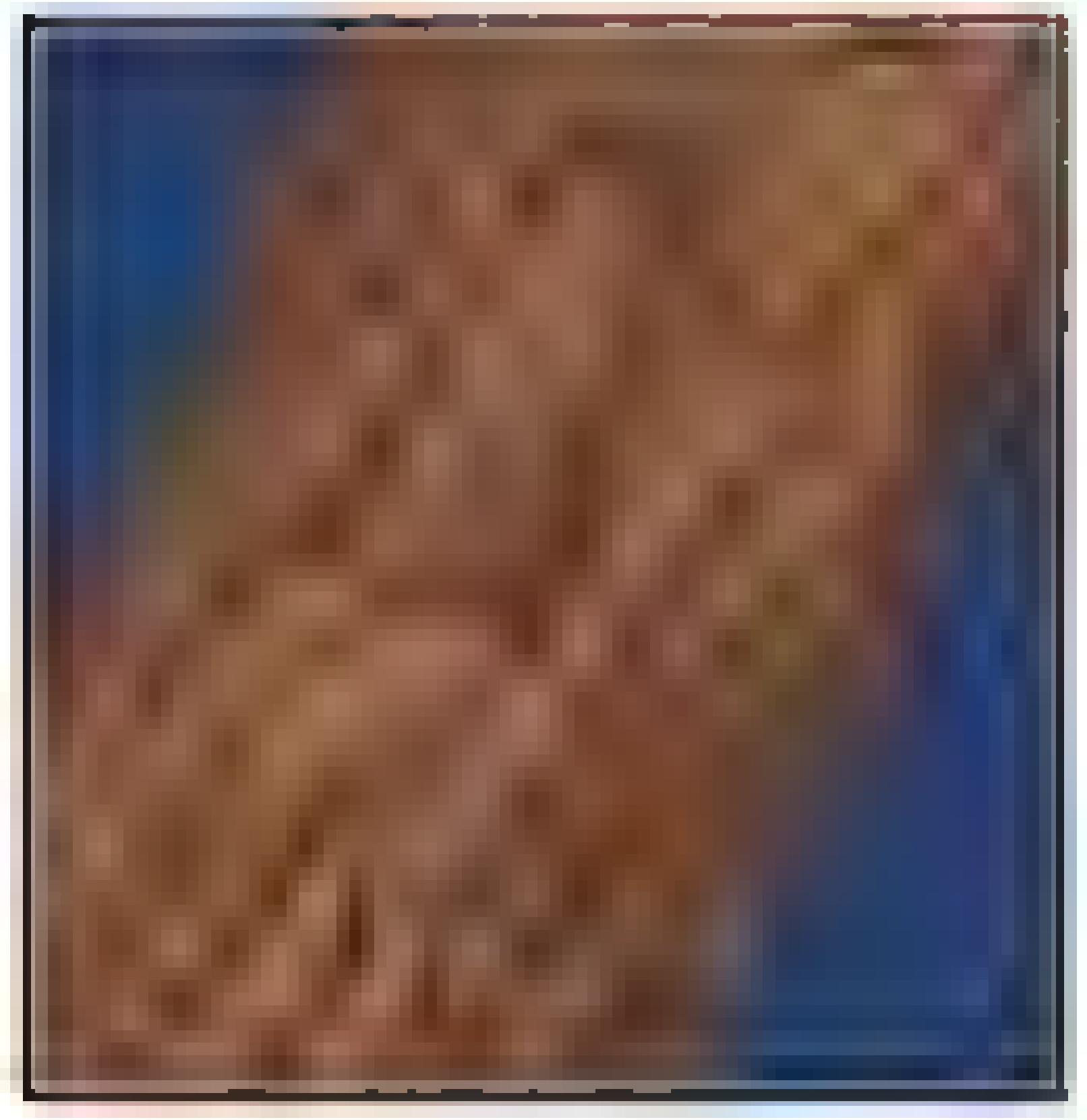
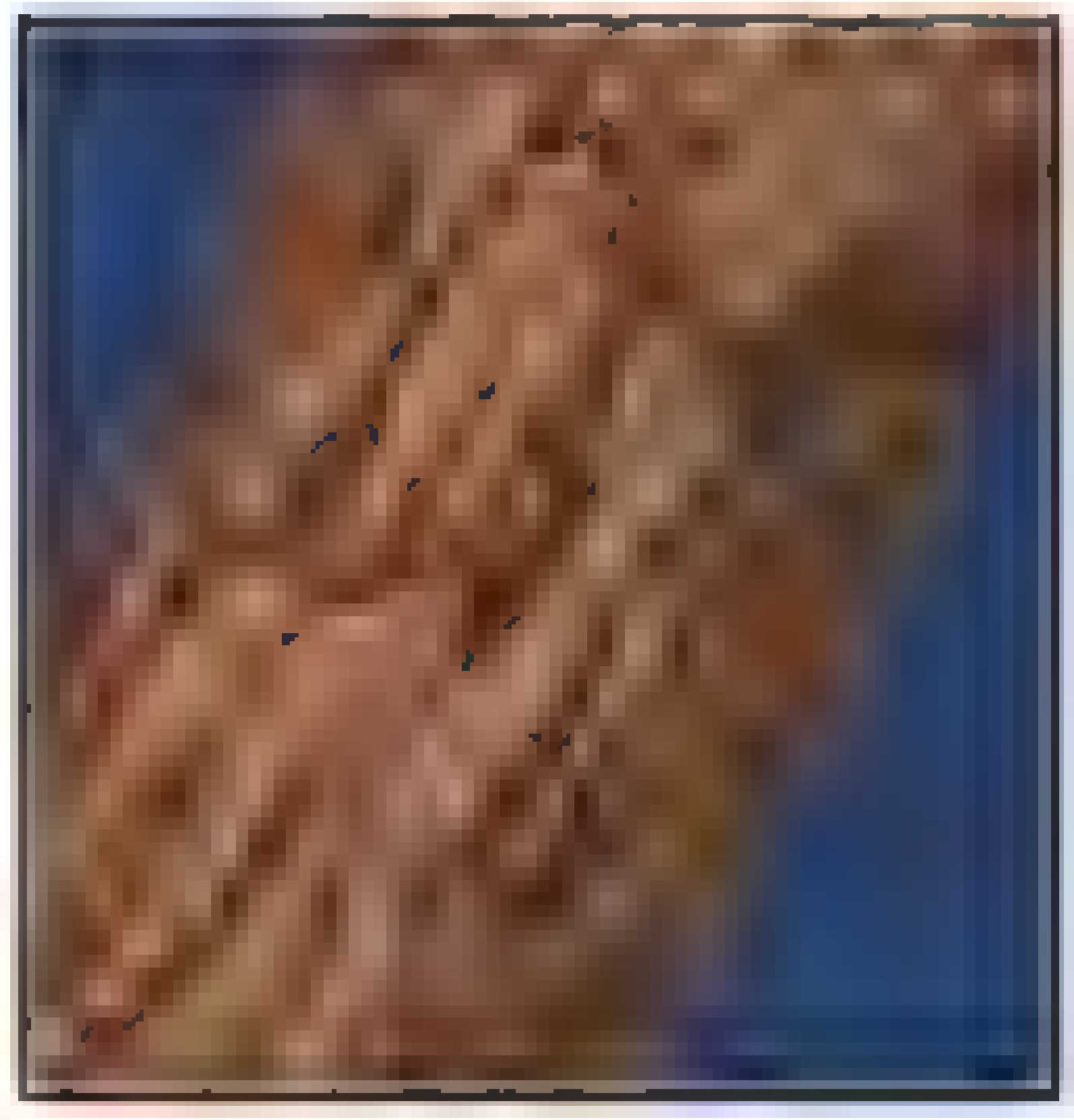


In nature, gnarled bark is a complex material, but one that's easily recreated on the digital canvas by following a sequence of logical steps. Once you've got the basics in place, you can continue to layer on details and texture as necessary

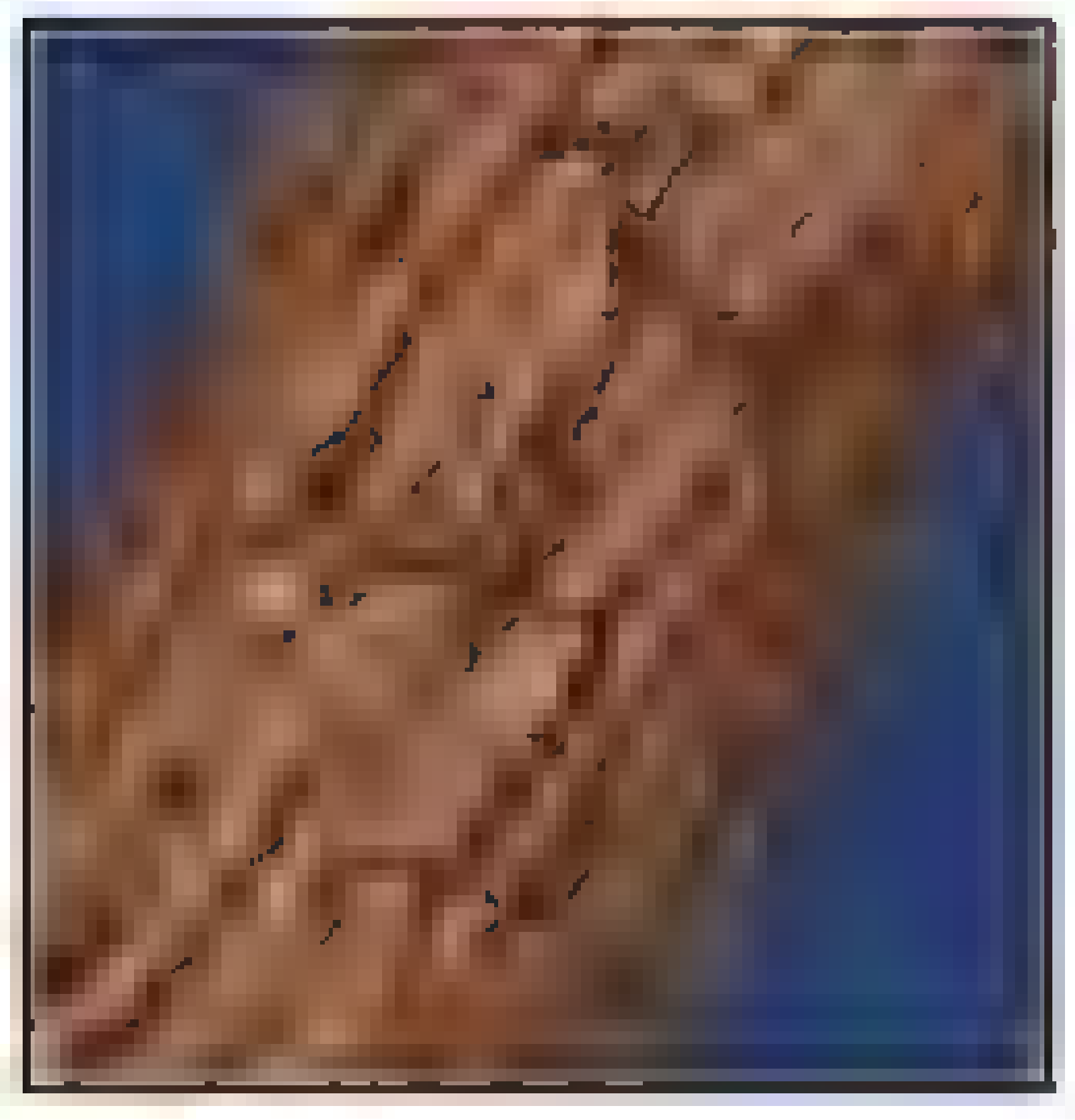
Step-by-step: Paint the trunk of a tree



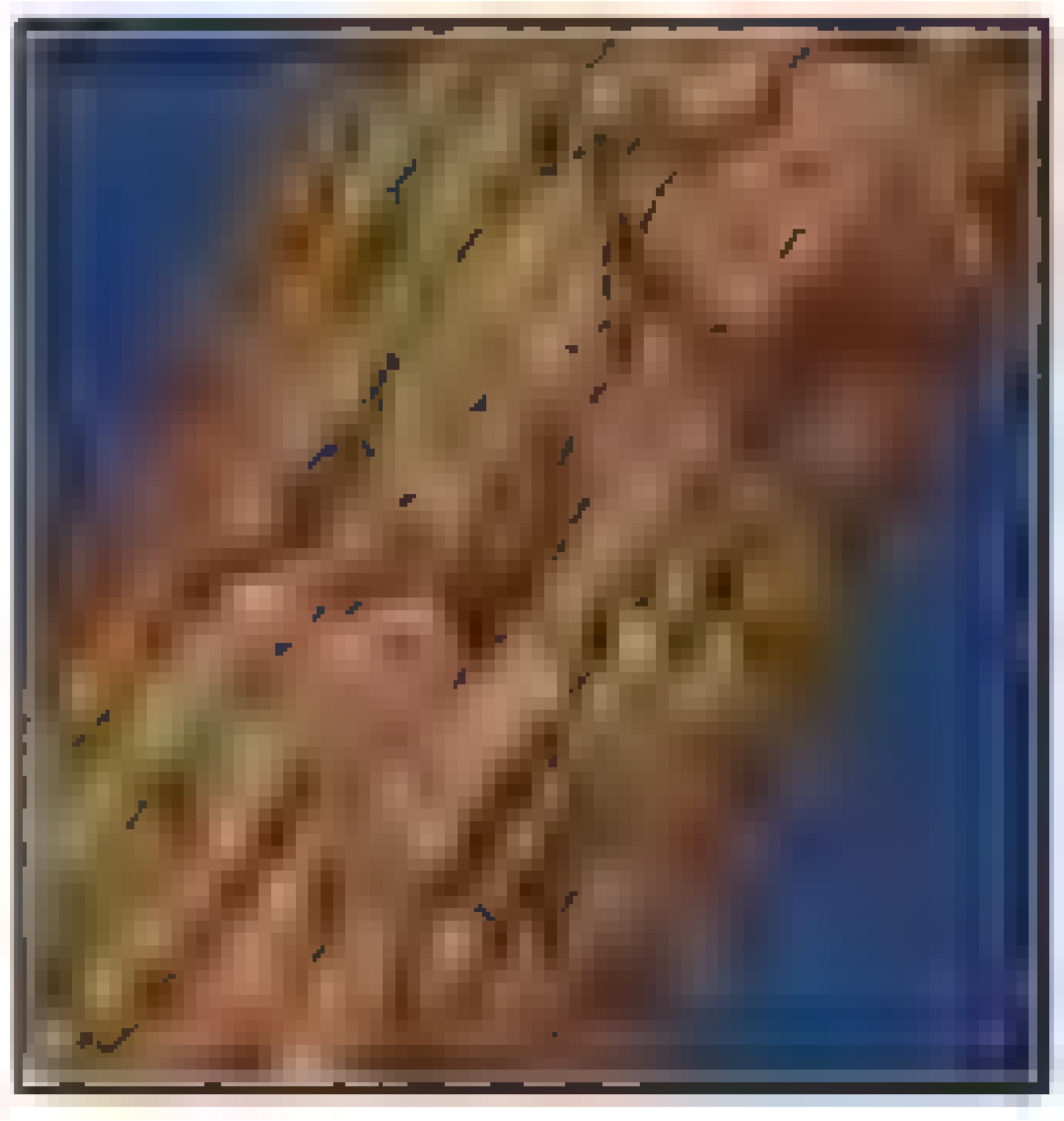
① Establish a base colour for your bark and enough tone to give the surface some form. Then draw in a basic pattern using a darker tone. Vary the size and opacity of your marks and stay loose while you work, because this will help to build up texture. Even highly figured bark tends to show consistent shapes, so introduce some repetition in the shapes you draw.



② Now try to visualise the surface pattern that's created by the bark in three dimensions. While referencing the direction and strength of your light source, begin to render some relief in the bark by adding lighter and darker tones. As before, remember to vary the size and opacity of your marks. Try to reinforce the overall form of the surface while you work.

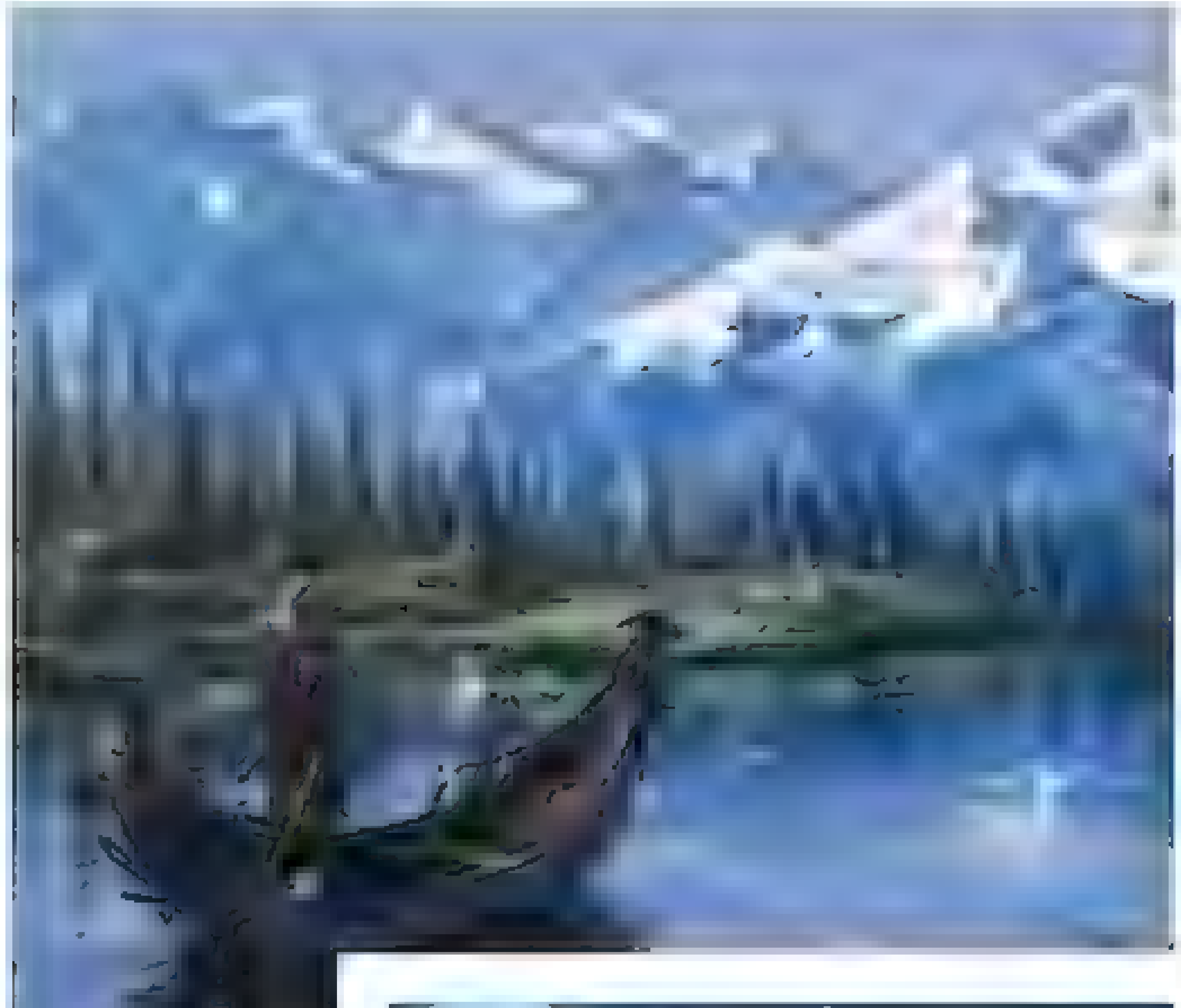


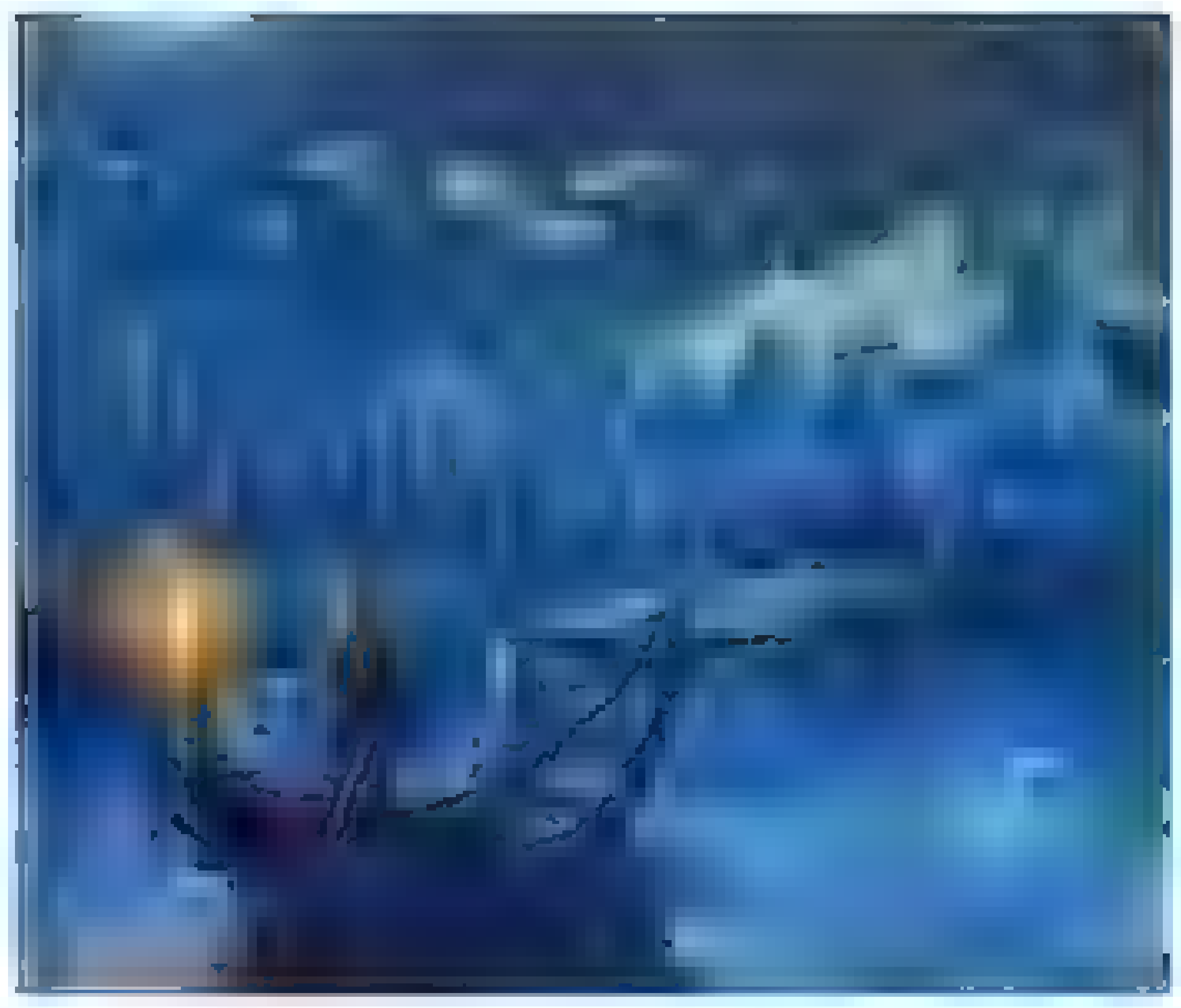
③ The next step is to add some colour variance to the tree's surface. Continue to work the texture of the bark that was established in the previous step using different hues. Include brighter and darker tones to add more detail and relief as needed. You can go wild here – lay in some quick marks on a layer and adjust the hue to experiment with different combinations.



④ Your basic bark material should now be complete, but there's no reason why you need stop there. This is the perfect image to build on. Add further interest to your material by adding some history. Some simple moss adds colour and an extra layer of texture here. You can continue to develop your bark in this way to reuse the same image again and again.

Question
Can I easily alter the time of day within an existing painting?
James MacDonald, New Zealand


This picture is about a warrior who's just retired and is returning to his homeland. It's morning, and there's a nice sunny day ahead of him.


Once I make the picture darker and more blueish, I paint in the light coming from the moon hitting the ground and the objects in the night-time environment

Answer
Remko replies

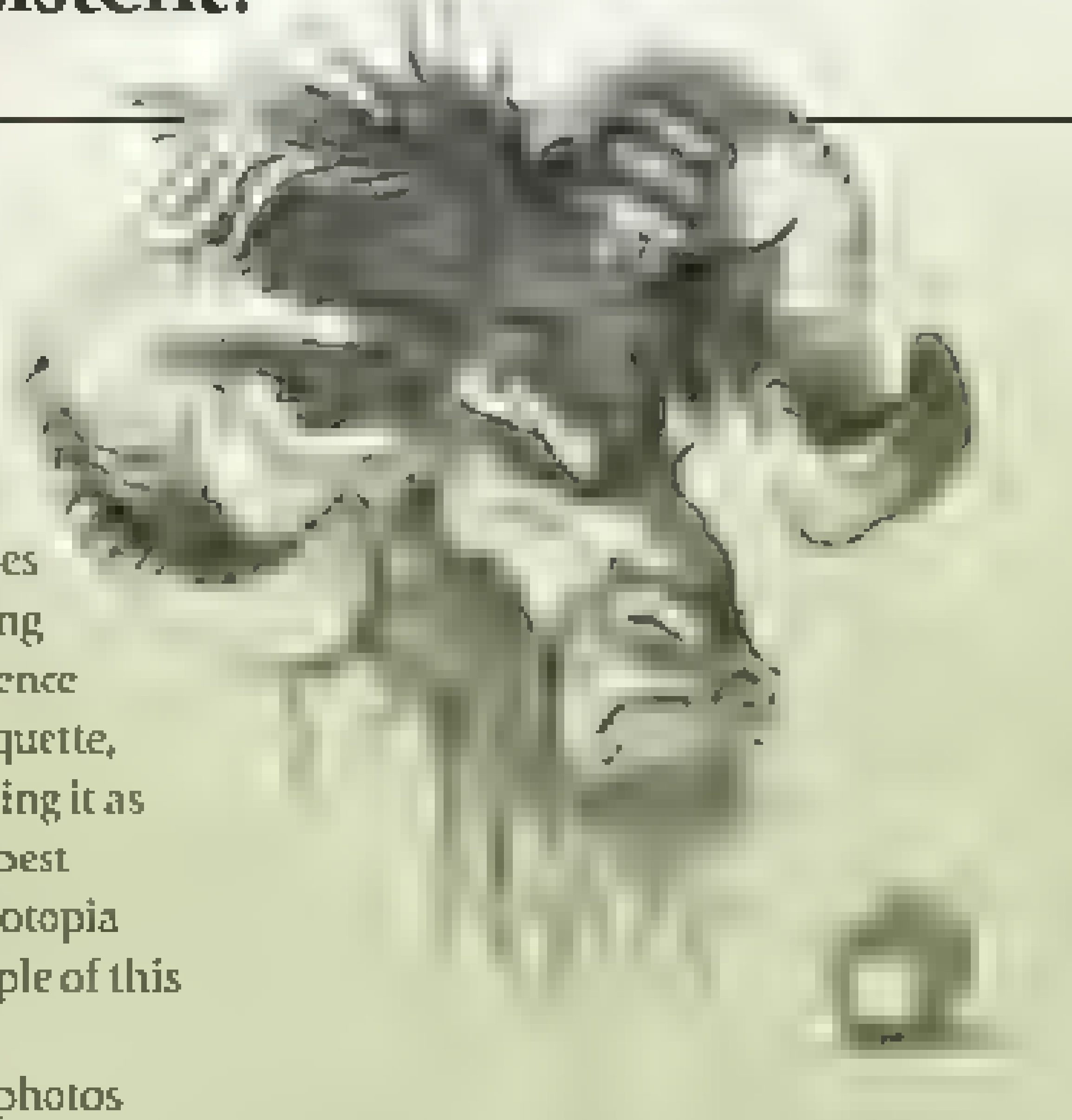
In this image I'm going to change the daylight setting with bright sun in the morning into a night scene featuring a full moon. First, I drop all my layers so I can easier manipulate the whole picture. I then open the Levels window. The slider enables you to either manipulate the levels/values of the whole picture or just the red, green or blue aspects. So for example, you could just change the red within a picture.

I want to take the picture into a night setting, which means making it darker and significantly more blue in tone. To do this I select red inside the window and push the slider to the right. I do the same with green, then push the blue slider to the left. The result is a dark and blueish image. Sometimes it might become too dark and I'll need to paint some information inside the shadows, using bouncing light for example, or other light sources in the picture.

Then using a Basic Round brush with Pen Pressure set to 100 per cent opacity and Flow at about 60 per cent, I paint in some blueish light here and there to simulate the light of the moon hitting the objects in the environment. I do the same on the boat and the main character.

Finally, to darken the sky before I paint in the moon and stars, I make a gradient with a purple, brownish or greenish colour to full transparency, going from above to below. I drop this layer's opacity to 30 per cent and set it to Multiply. I paint in a moon and stars before adding a fire to create some nice contrast to the overall blue tone by adding the yellow and orange colours of this second light source.

Question
How do I keep multiple light sources consistent?
Germaine Jones, US


Using an orb as a reference, I paint my light sources onto this and use it to judge how light will affect my painting proper

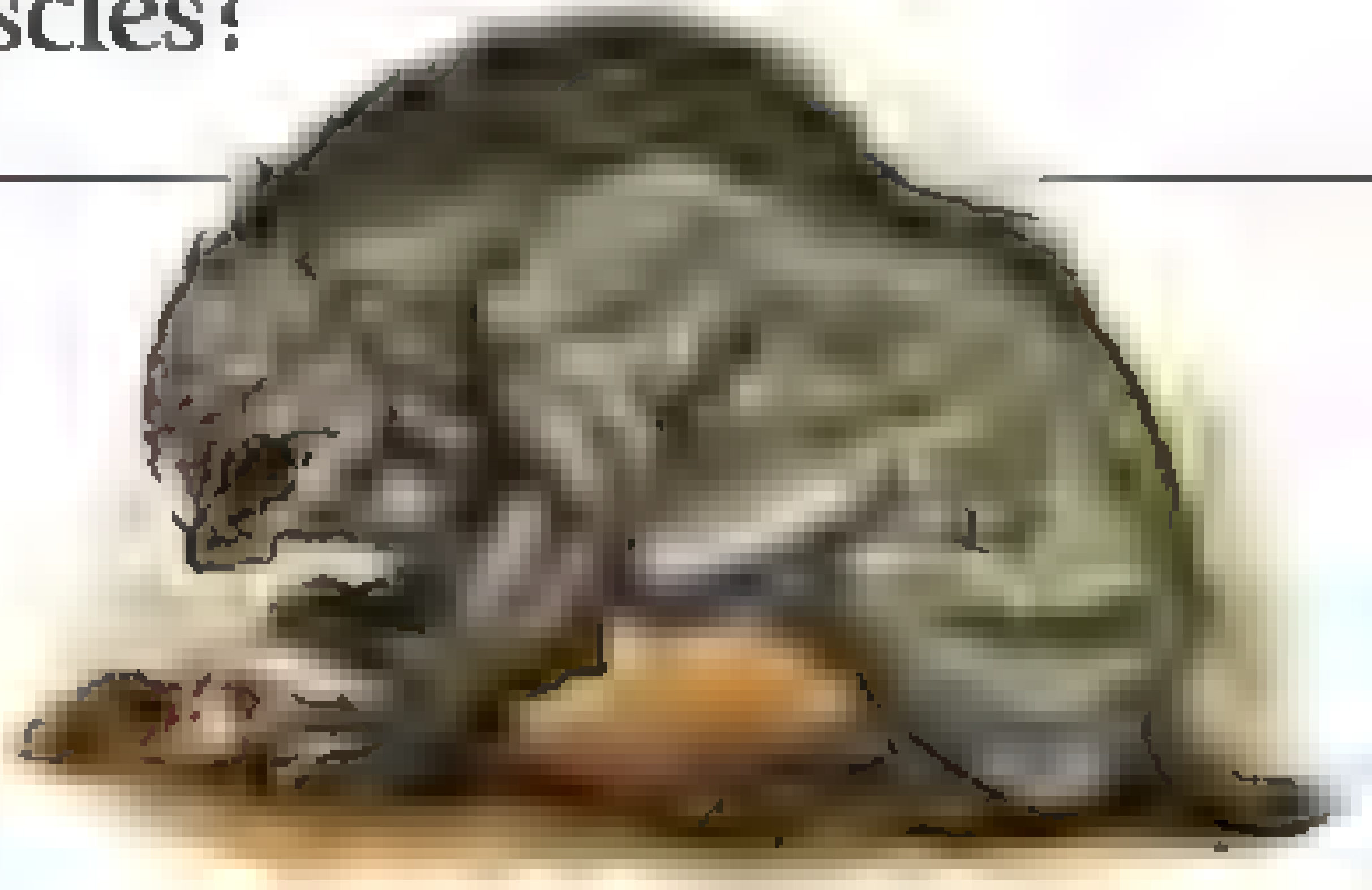
Answer
Justin replies

The best solution is to have perfect photo-references of the subject you're working on. If no exact photo-reference exists, then building a maquette, lighting it and photographing it as your reference, is the next best thing. James Gurney's Dinotopia series is an excellent example of this method in action.

Sometimes I'll also use photos that are of subjects unrelated to mine, but that have the lighting I'm interested in. These photos offer a guide as I visualise my subject in a 3D space and calculate how the light will hit it. Even though it isn't a one-to-one transfer as with exact photo-reference, I find that it can be very helpful.

There's also a shorthand version of this that I use, especially when working in a sketchbook or on small conceptual pieces. I draw a small orb and light it in the manner that I hope to achieve for my subject. As I work through my drawing I can come back and reference this orb, applying the lighting on it to my subject.

Question
How do I define my monster's powerful muscles?
Sarah Berry, England

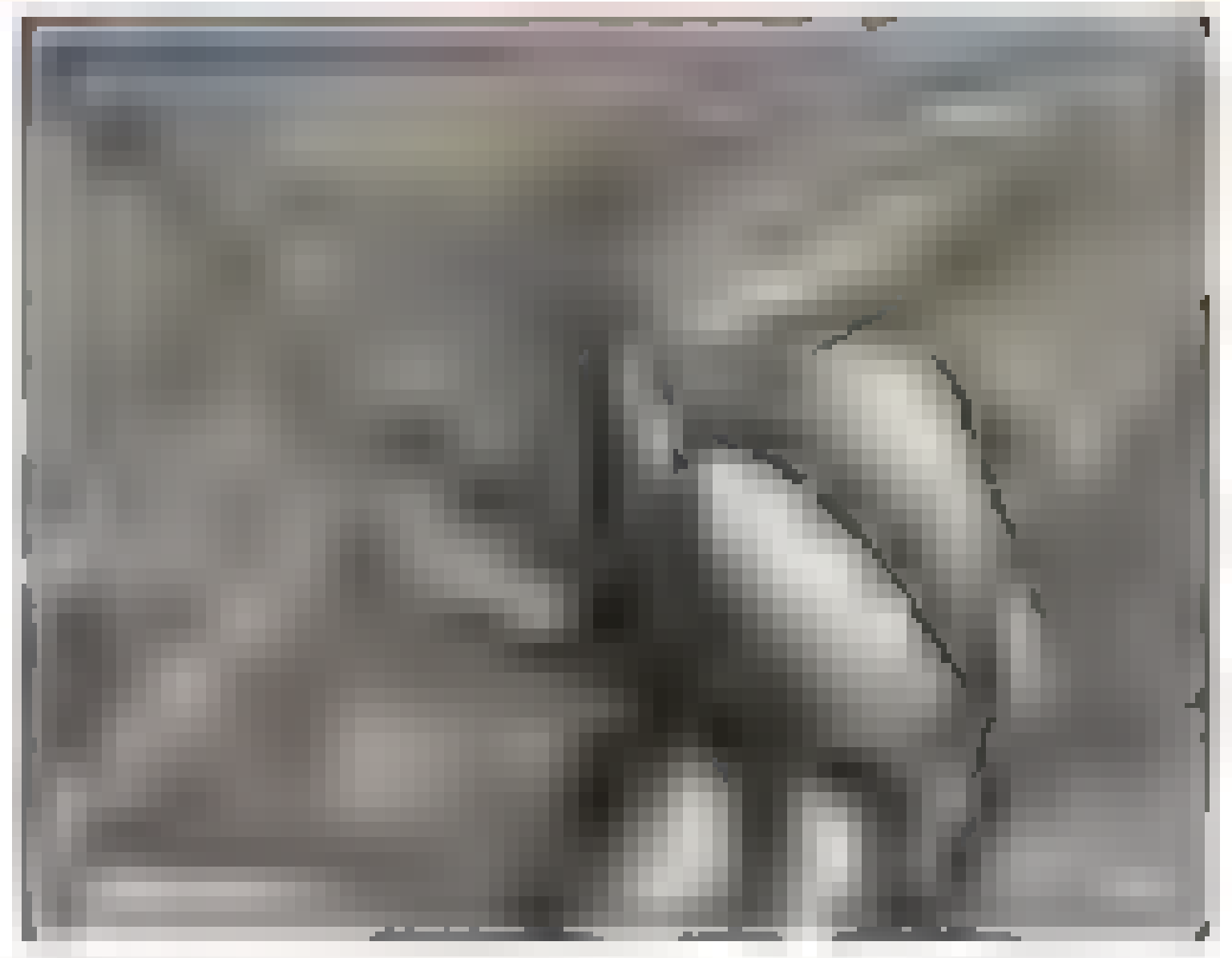


Answer
Brynn replies

Defining muscle structure can give your monster a powerful and intimidating look. While you want it to look muscular, never forget that fat, skin and sometimes fur, feathers or scales might lie on top. Studying animal and even human muscle structure and anatomy will help you achieve that 'in between' look.

Adding a light source will help define muscle shape and volume. Thinking about the muscles as elongated spheres that fold in and out of each other will help in visualising how they might be lit. Using light, shadow and reflective light, you can create a defined look.

I sketch out the muscles looking at bears, cats and dogs for reference. While painting my image, I refer back to this study to make sure the anatomy's correct as I move forward. If you want to get a good visual, try sculpting a small model out of clay and lighting it yourself.


Painting the muscles simply can help you visualise them. Always keep the sphere in mind: light, shadow and reflective light

Question
Have you got any tips for painting heavy, old, worn and used armour?
Mike Powel, Wales

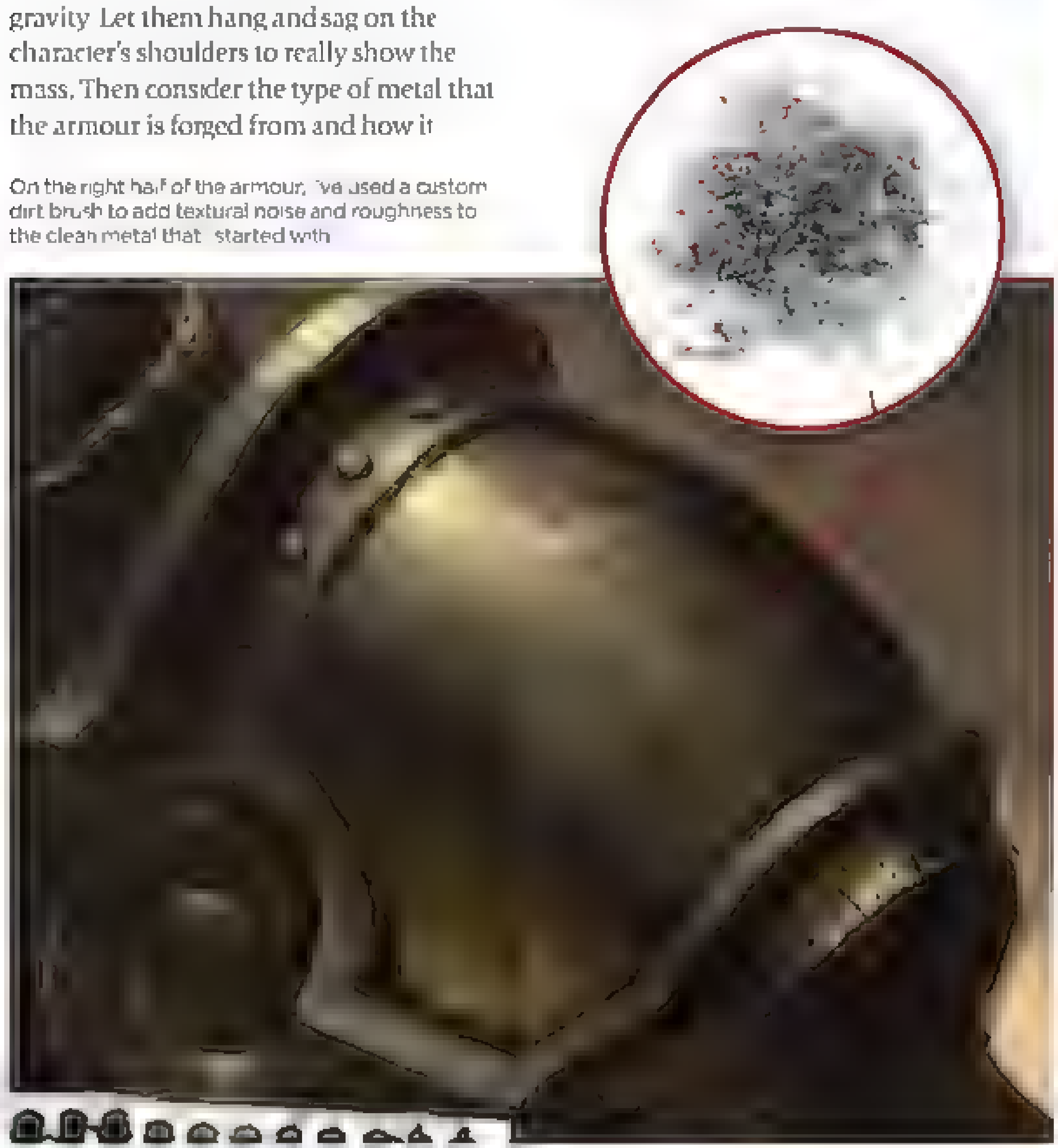
Answer
Raymond replies

Knowing how to depict wear and tear on weapons and armour is a powerful skill for bringing believability to a painting. Because illustration is primarily a storytelling medium, the ageing of a character's armour can play a big role in forming the backstory that led to the scene being depicted

The first thing to keep in mind when creating a large and aged suit of armour is the anatomy of the person wearing it If the shoulder pads are huge and intimidating, don't let them just sit up high and defy gravity Let them hang and sag on the character's shoulders to really show the mass. Then consider the type of metal that the armour is forged from and how it corrodes: iron rusts while bronze turns a green patina. Break up any solid surfaces by creating visual noise that suggests the pitting of corrosion and dirt in the low areas. I do this with a simple 'dirt brush' that I created

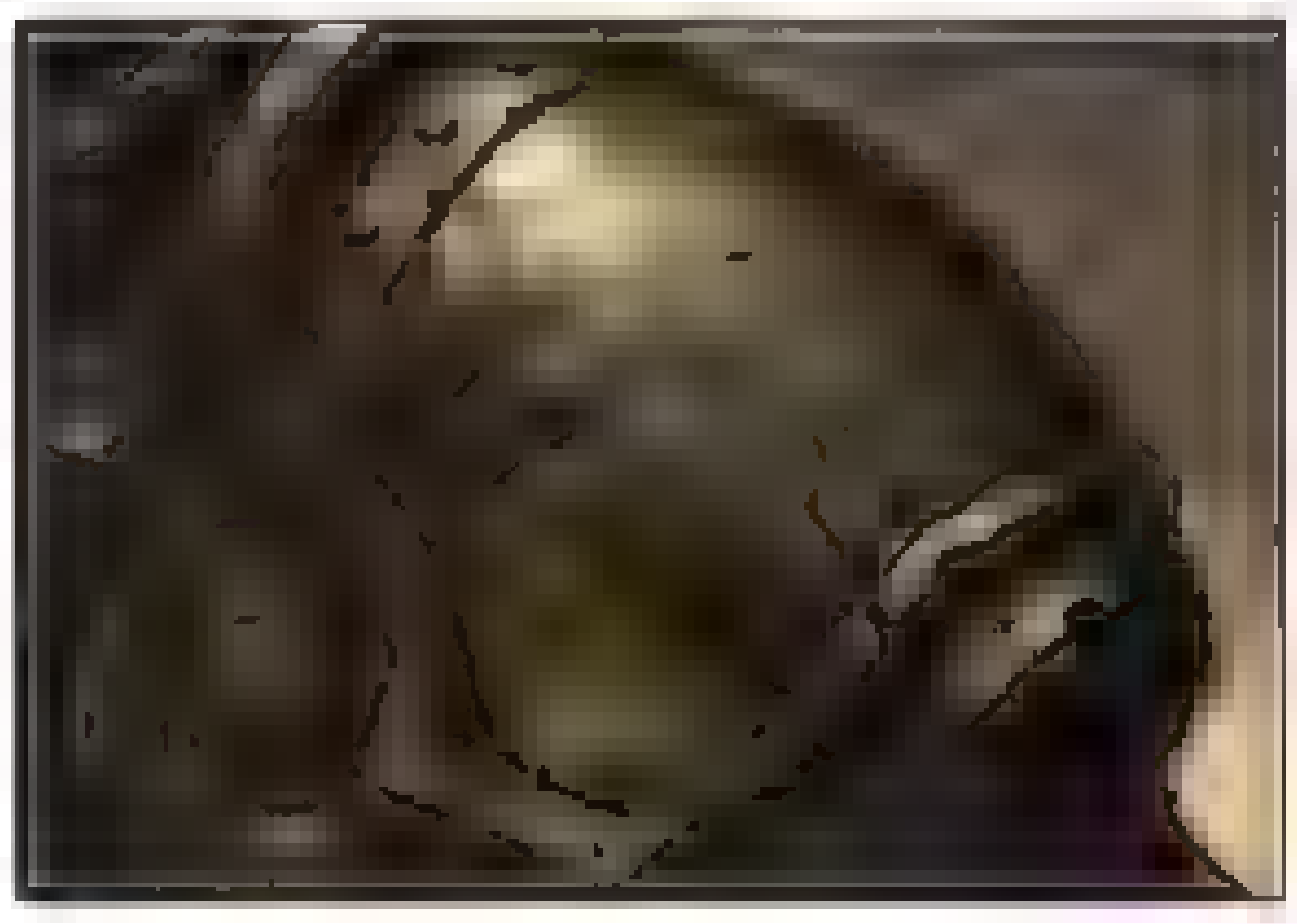
If you decide to overlay a photographic texture of worn metal then I suggest doing it lightly and continuing to hand-paint cracks and scratches over it. The last stage is where the real storytelling happens, by painting in unique damage like the dent from a crossbow bolt or the scratches of dragon claws

On the right half of the armour, I've used a custom dirt brush to add textural noise and roughness to the clean metal that I started with



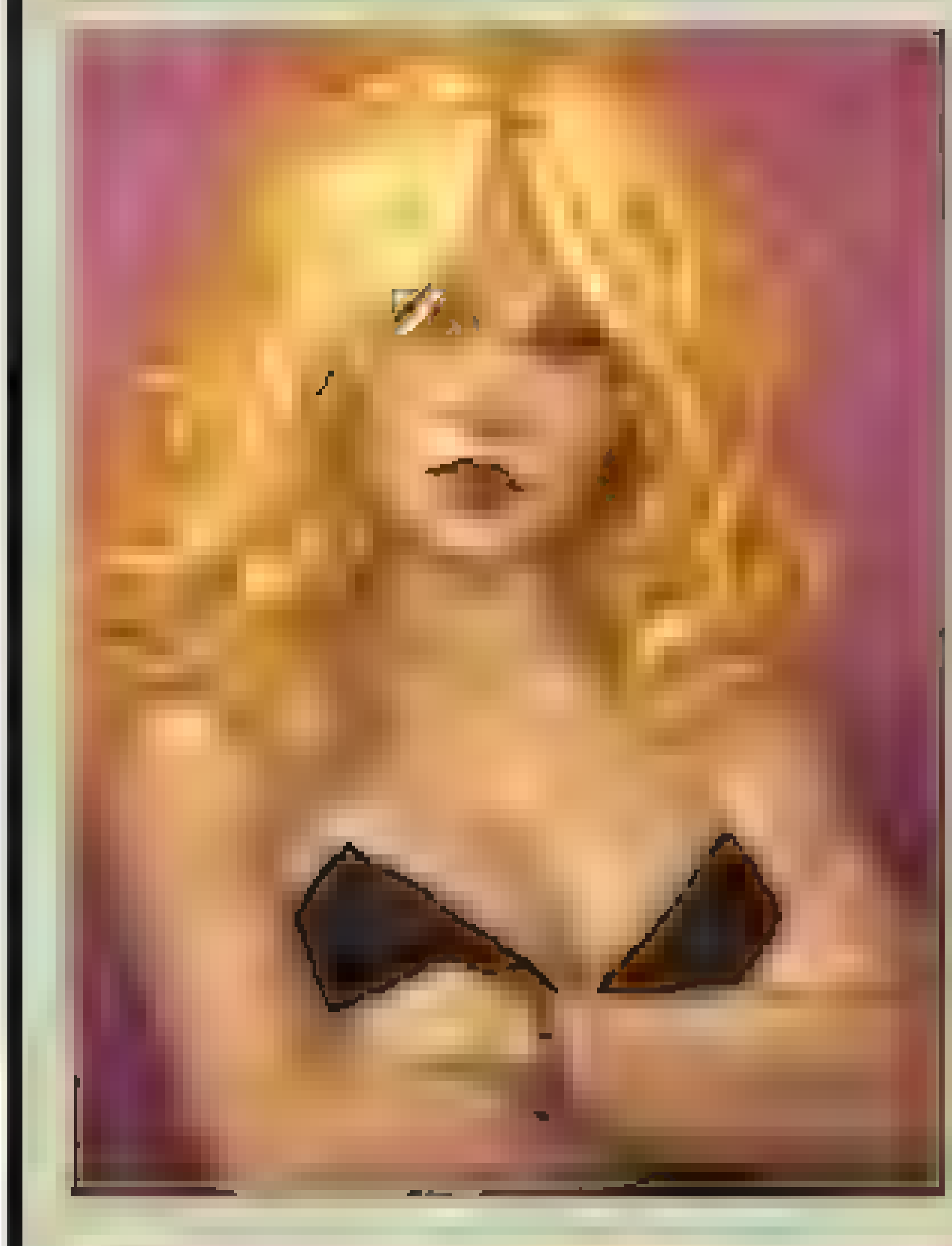
Artist's secret
RECOGNISE THE RAVAGES OF TIME

[illegible]

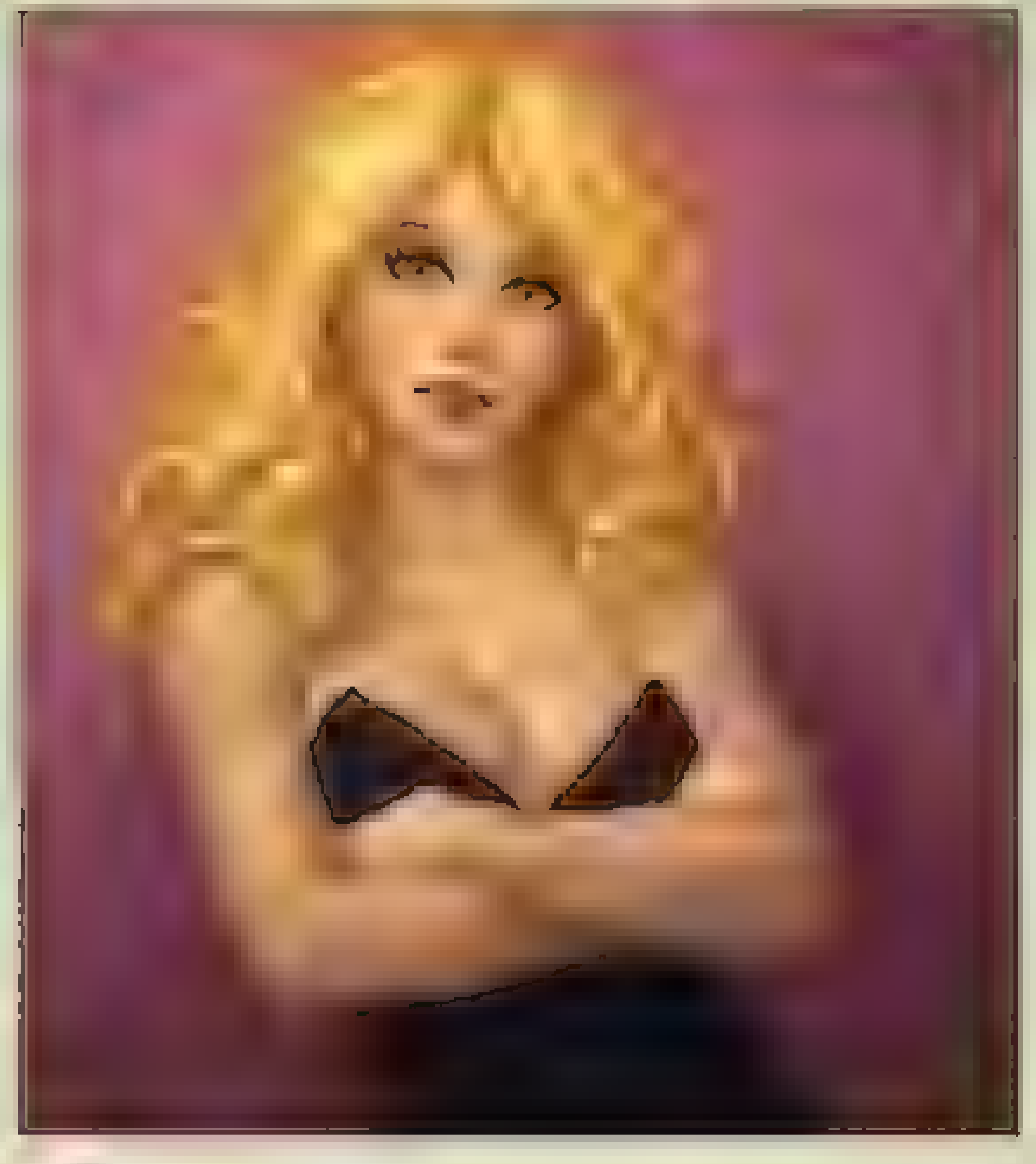


Now I hand-paint cracks and gouges in the metal. They're placed to seem random, but also to be an obvious cue as to the armour's age and wear

Question
What tricks can I use to direct the viewer's gaze?
Ross Roachford, US



With the eyes softened into shadow, the mouth is the area of highest contrast and becomes the focal point, while the jewellery provides lower contrast focal areas where the eye can rest.



High contrast places a strong focus on the eyes. A lack of competing focal points in this image makes it difficult for our gaze to rest anywhere else

Answer
Matt replies

Areas of high contrast will generally attract the viewer's gaze and tend to define the strongest focal points in an image. Unique colours and bold shapes will also draw the eye into the image. The human face is a good example where the eyes are a natural focal point, because they satisfy all three criteria: they're the area of greatest contrast, with the iris providing both a unique colour and a regular circular shape

Using this knowledge you can compose your image so that the greatest contrast is concentrated where you want the viewer's gaze to fall. By balancing the contrast in other areas you can also develop a hierarchy of focal points, which can help steer the eye around your image. A single strong focal point will give an image punch and immediacy, but may feel a little shallow Several carefully balanced focal areas often deliver a more interesting image that encourages the viewer's eye to explore

Next month

ON SALE: 23 August

How to paint glowing, magical tattoos

Question

How can I achieve a clean, polished look quickly in my digital art?

Sandi Bailey, England

Answer

Paco replies

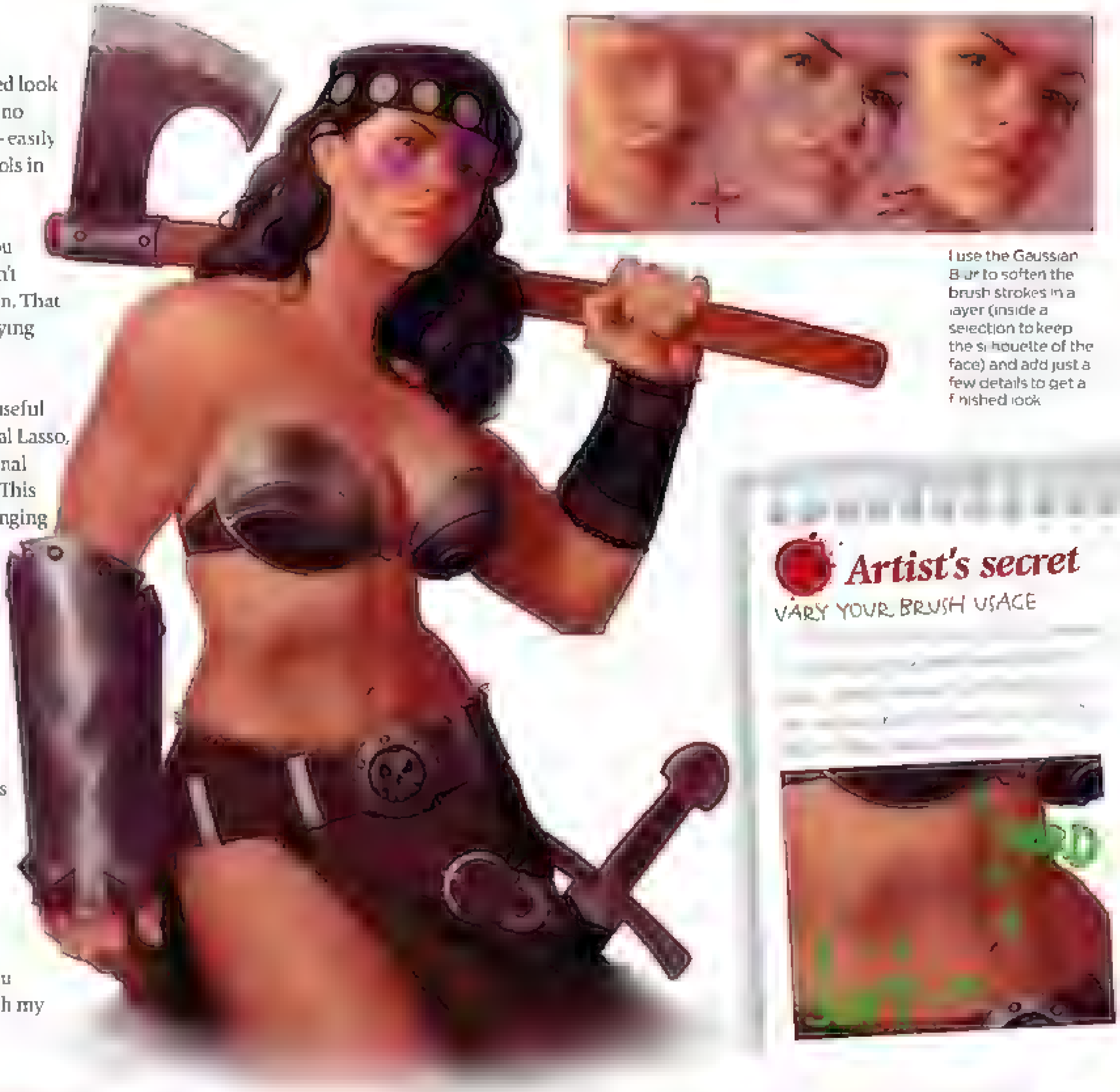
Usually a clean, polished look means clean edges and no obvious brush strokes – easily done by utilising the tools in Photoshop and SAI Painting Tool.

Clean edges are easily achieved working inside a selected area. If you select a part of your image, you won't be able to paint outside the selection. That means you can paint without worrying about running outside the edges of whatever you are doing.

If you use Photoshop, the most useful tools for selections are the Polygonal Lasso, which creates straight-sided polygonal selections and the Magnetic Lasso. This creates selections automatically, clinging to the edges of the figures, so you can select the silhouette of something you have previously drawn without much effort.

To get polished surfaces quickly, you can use Photoshop's Gaussian Blur filter. With it you can blur all the brush strokes on a roughly painted layer. You won't get a finished look with that trick, but it's a fast way to get a smooth base to work with.

Away from Photoshop I like to use the budget software SAI Painting Tool for my line art. This software has a unique Stabilizer feature that tidies up the lines as you sketch. I'll explain how it fits in with my workflow in the steps below.



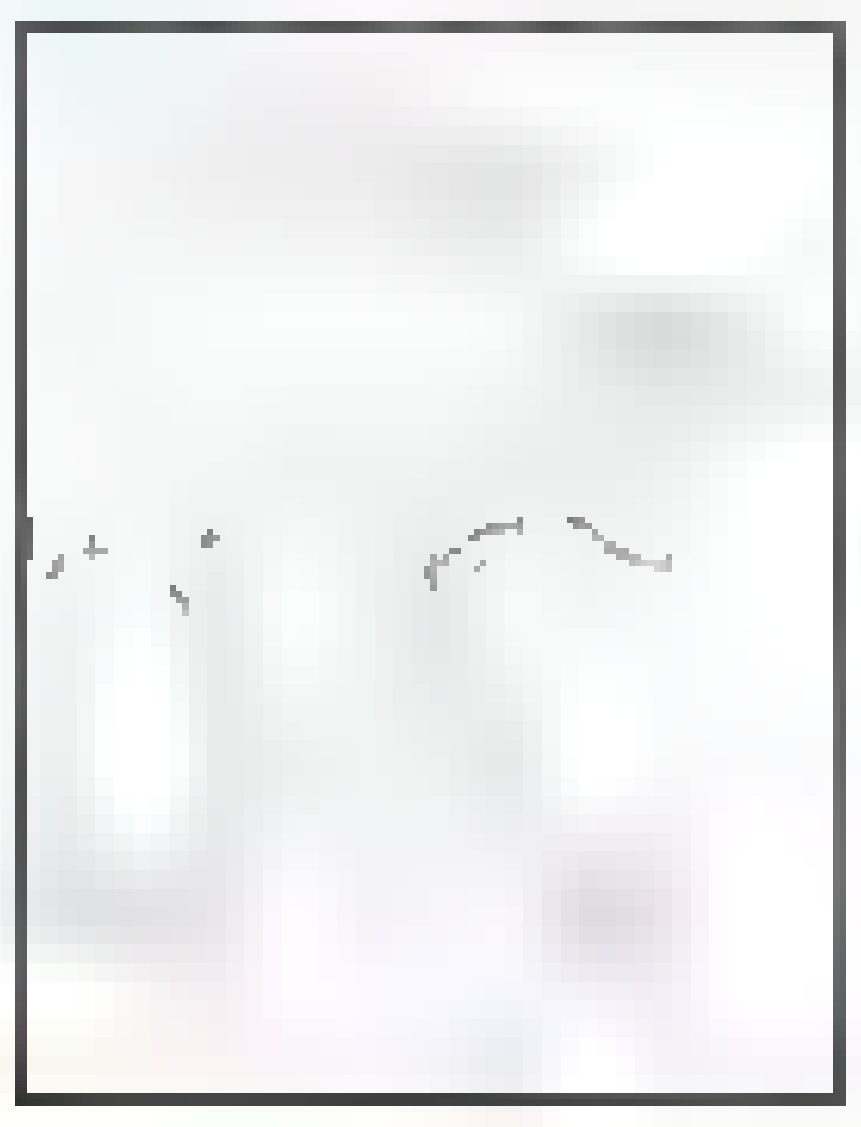
I use the Gaussian Blur to soften the brush strokes in a layer (inside a selection to keep the silhouette of the face) and add just a few details to get a finished look

Artist's secret

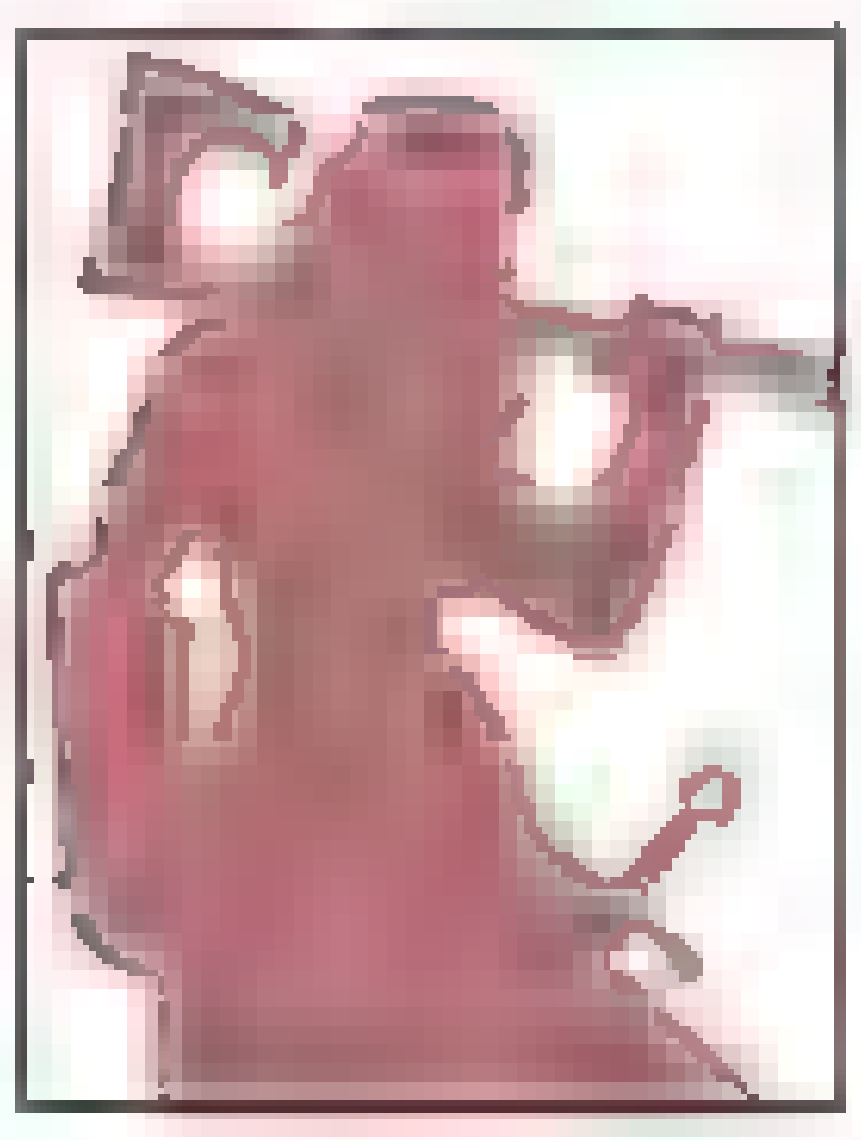
VARY YOUR BRUSH USAGE

Step-by-step: Paint a character cleanly

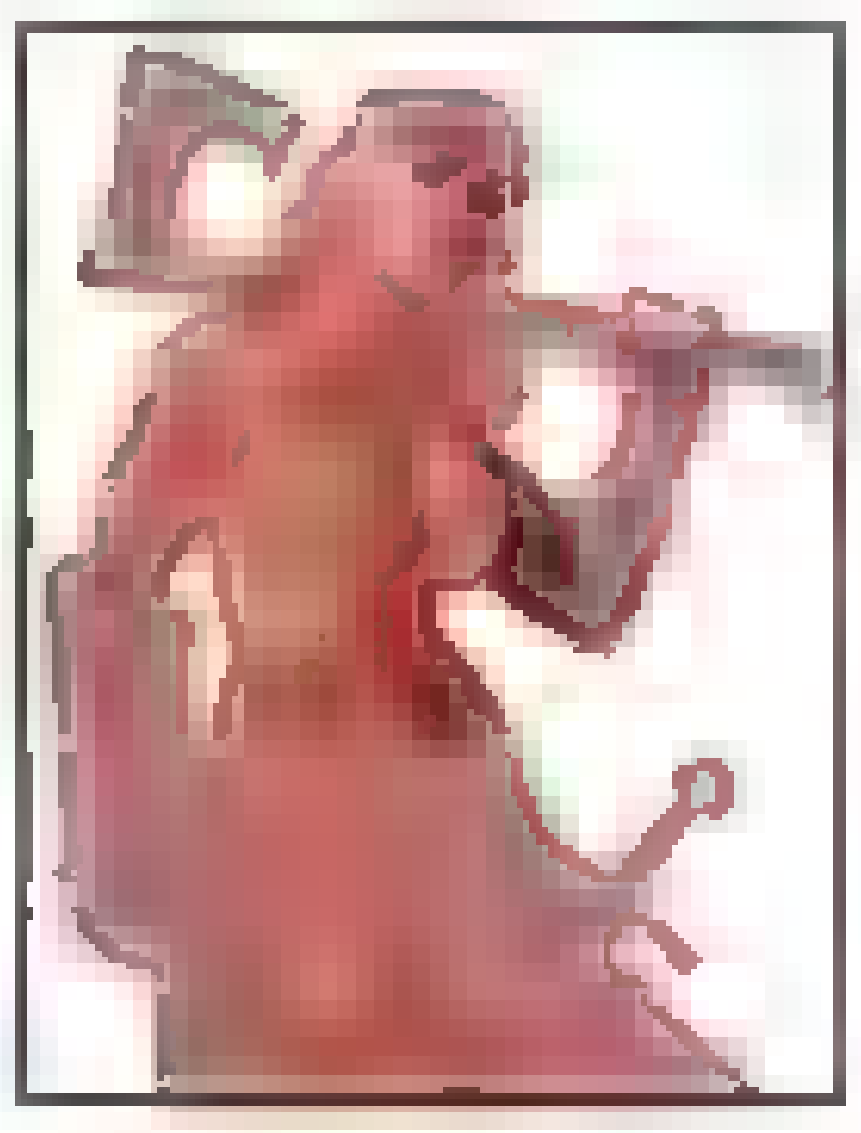
① First I start by doodling a sketch. Once I have something I like, I make a line drawing of it. This drawing doesn't have to look good, it just needs to be as clean and accurate as possible, to act as a guide for my painting. If you have shaky hands like me then you may want to use SAI Painting Tool. The Stabilizer feature makes this step a lot easier.



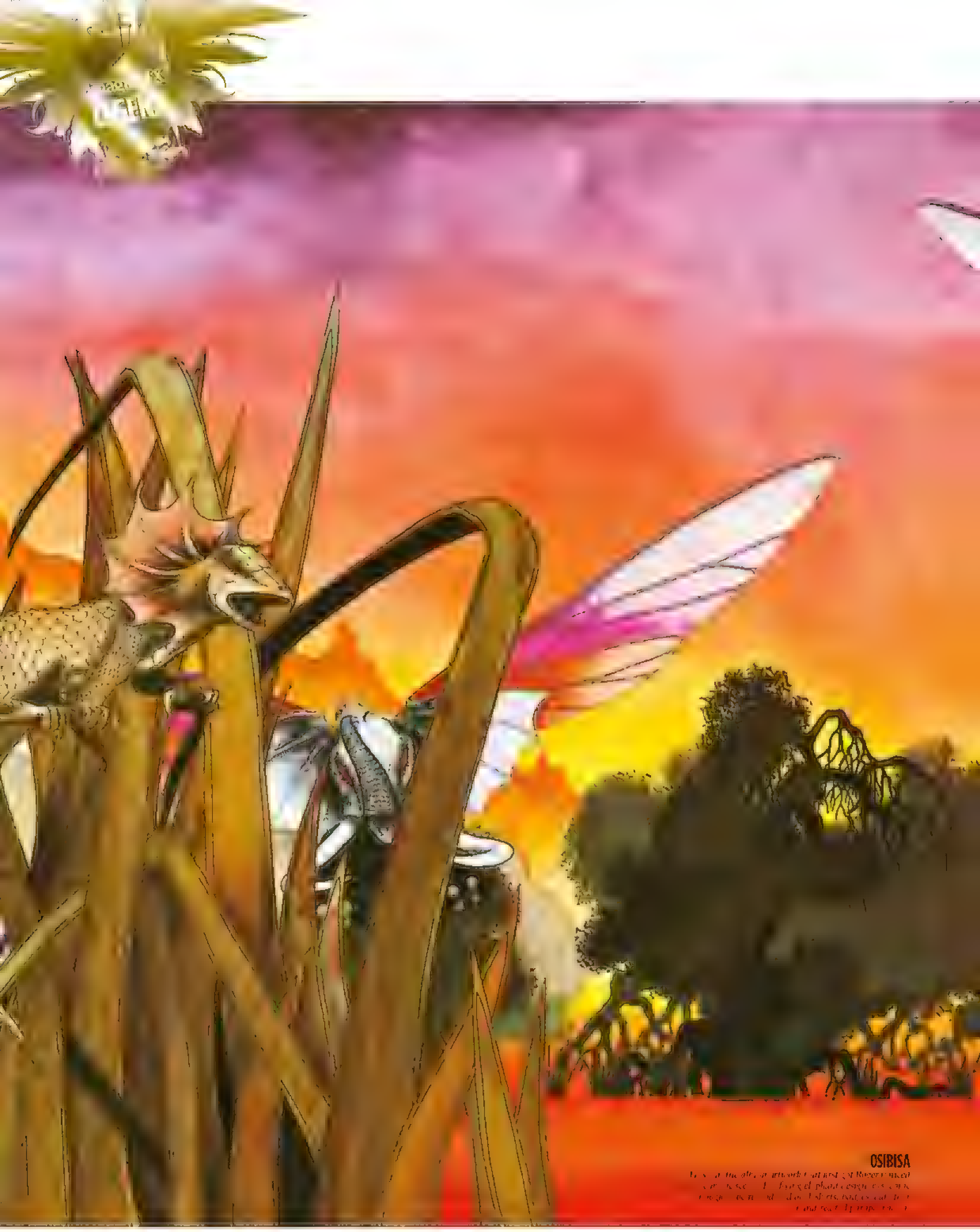
② Next, I use the Magnetic Lasso tool in Photoshop to create a selection of the whole figure. The Lasso follows the lines automatically, so the cleaner the drawing is, the better. If you make a mistake while using the Lasso, you can delete it by pressing Backspace. Once the selection is made I create a new layer and fill that selected area with a plain base colour.



③ In further layers I began to paint the flesh, first with rough brush strokes blurred using Gaussian Blur filter to create a base, and then just painting carefully into my blocked colour, concentrate on one area of the figure at a time, repeating the same process with the rest of the parts of the figure as I go. Finally, I just make some tweaks to ensure all the parts fit together.

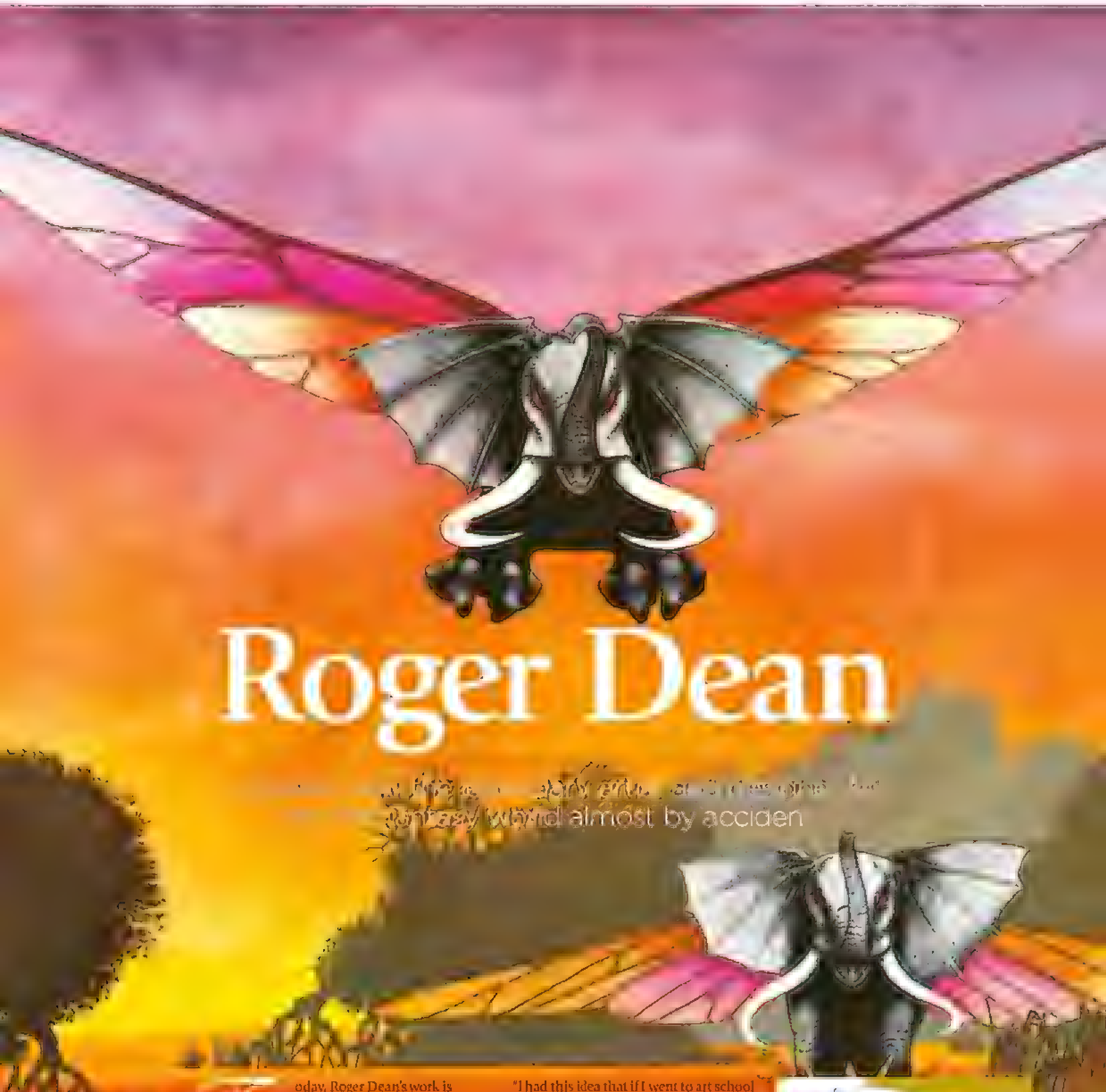


Got a digital art problem? Is an image giving you art-ache? Our panel can help. Email your question to our experts at **help@imaginefx.com** or write to **Artist Q&A, ImagineFX, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK.**



OSIBISA

[illegible] the album artwork that first got Roger noticed [illegible] plant designs [illegible]



Roger Dean

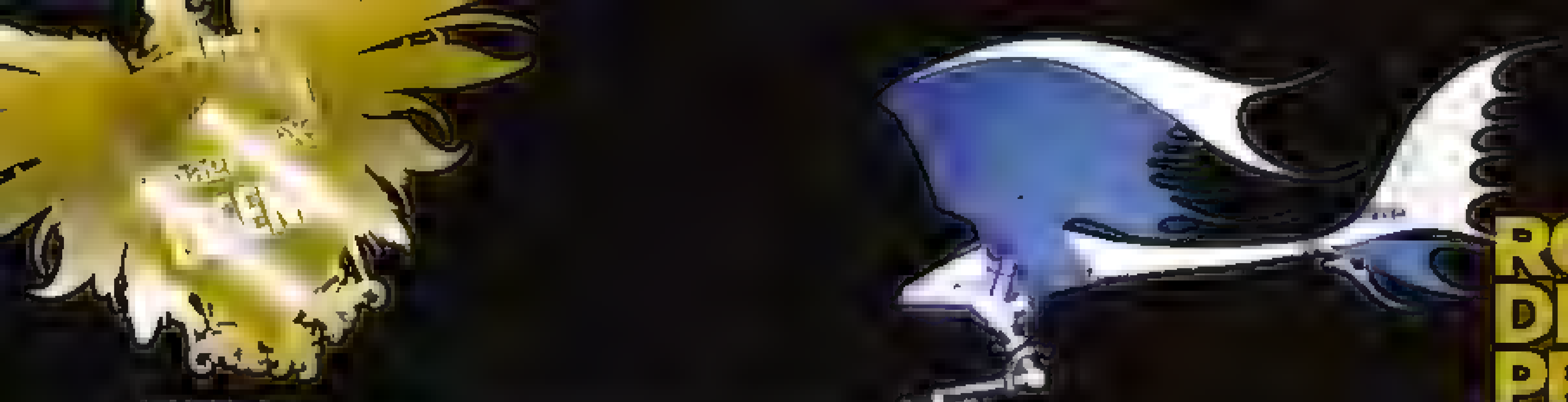
[illegible] fantasy world almost by acciden

Today, Roger Dean's work is every bit as awe-inspiring as it was when he designed album covers in the 1970s and 80s. Revered the world over, worshipped by fans for decades and still a practising artist and designer, Roger is a true phenomenon in the fantasy genre. However, his career as one of the world's seminal album cover artists came about somewhat unconventionally.

"I had this idea that if I went to art school I would be designing the future. And that was a particularly thrilling and exciting thing for someone who was brought up on comic characters such as Dan Dare." He continues: "I also had the notion that if you went to art school then natural history, which was a hobby of mine, would also get a look in. But I discovered the hard way that art school was lots of tiny pigeonholes

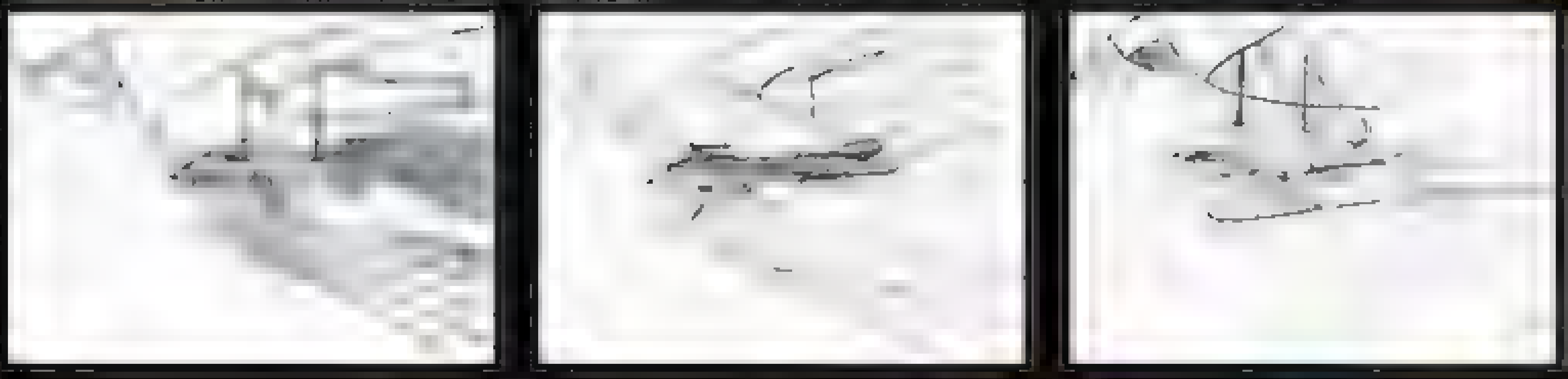
Artist
PROFILE

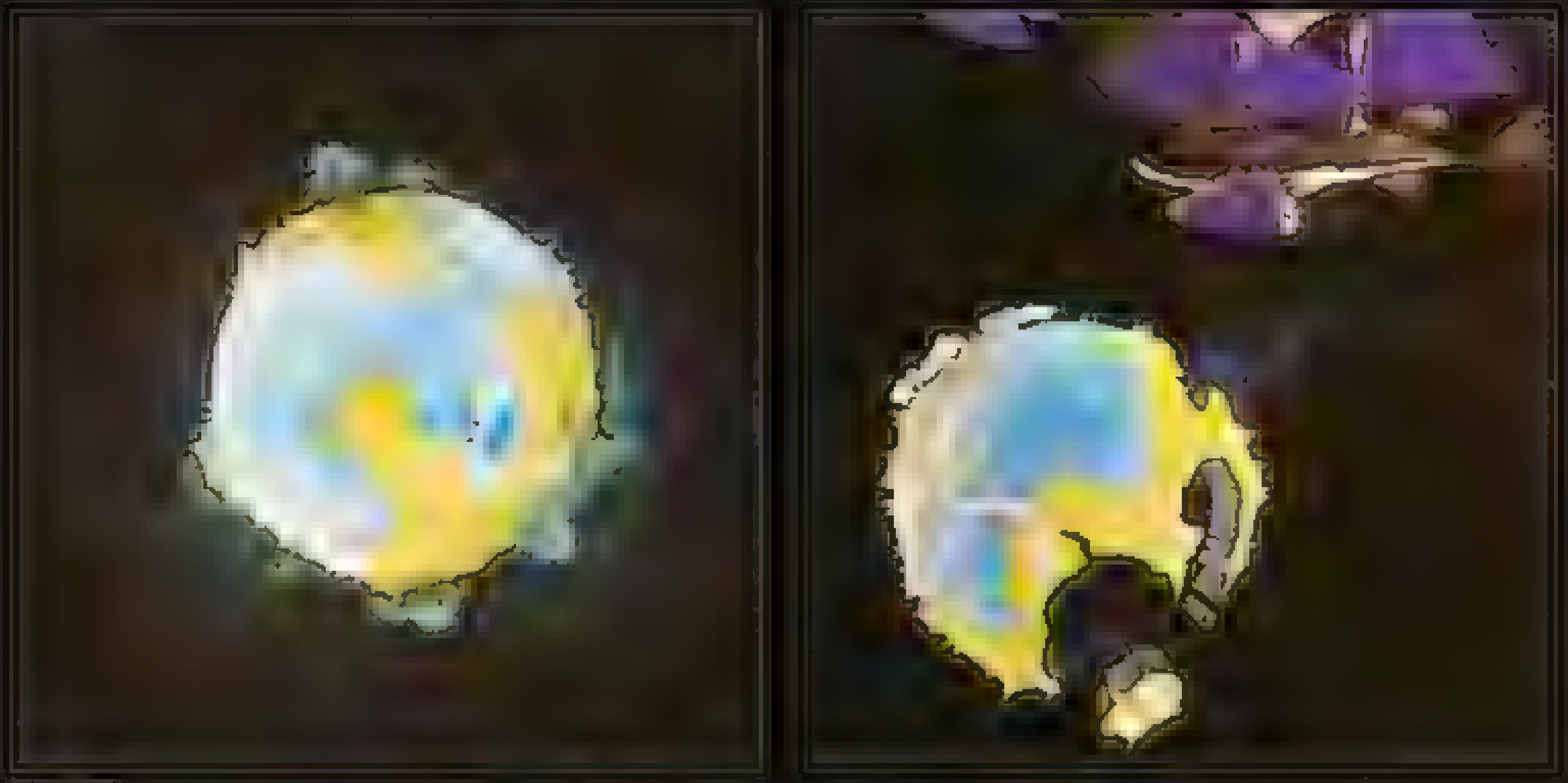
[illegible] of some of the most original looking images seen in po [illegible]



SPACESHIP

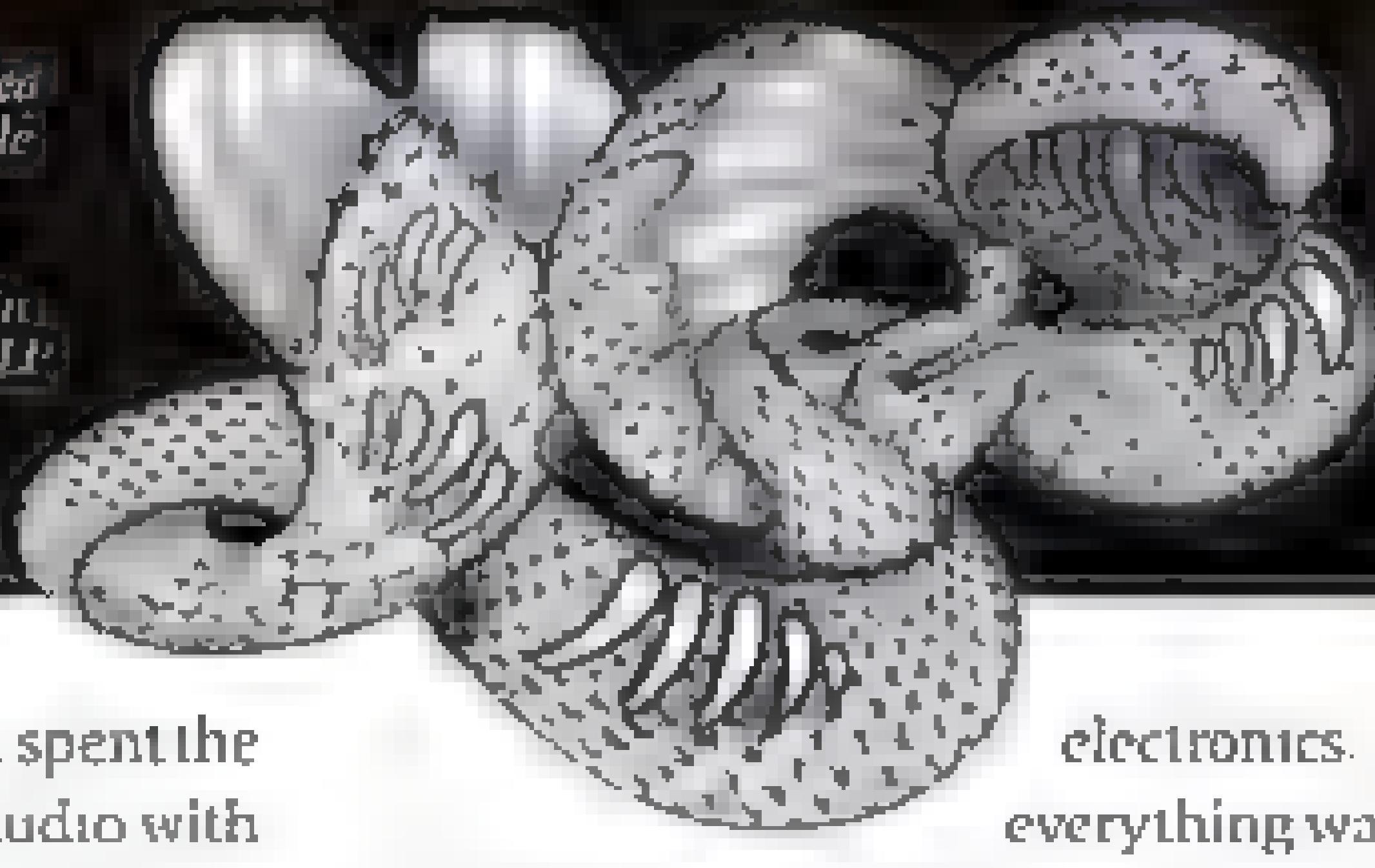
During discussions with Yes, it transpires that the inhabitants of the fractured planet use a spaceship to find a new home. Roger sketched out the designs of the vehicle, before settling on the bird-like look that features on the reverse of the album Fragile.





FRAGILE

This is Roger's artwork that accompanied the 1971 album release of Fragile. While the artist had the idea of painting a miniature world, Yes wanted to see a broken piece of porcelain on the cover. In the end both concepts made it onto the LP sleeve: the whole world on the front, the fragmenting planet on the back.



NEW YES LOGO

Roger's pen and ink line drawing of the latest version of the Yes logo, which he finished in May this year.

ROGER DEAN'S PROCESS

Discover how the artist tackles his projects to get the best result possible down on paper

"I basically have two primary ways of working," says Roger when questioned on his painting process. "I do have more than that, but there are two primary ways. One is I have an idea and it's a hard-edged visual idea and I can draw it. I don't get it right first time but I might do five, 10, 15, maybe 150 sketches. And I refine it and get it there. The very first thumbnail doodle I do, which might be an inch and a half by an inch and a half, you'd probably recognise the cover from that first doodle. But it takes refining. It's like looking at something through a fog and clearing it gradually. That's one way I work and I work a lot like that. I've got hundreds of sketchbooks and you can see the evolution of an idea, in a clear way.

"The other way I work is much more [illegible]," Roger continues. "And I basically splash paint all over a canvas – maybe over ten canvases – choose one and try and impose on it just the first key features of an idea. And then I let the painting evolve; let the canvas keep nudging me and giving me ideas from the randomness of the original splashing of paint. And I find that exciting because I'm constantly [illegible] to see. That's much more like exploring. It's a mixture of both and I work in this experimental way about a quarter of the time. I have the idea of what I want to do clearly advanced in my head three-quarters of the time. I don't just have ideas when somebody asks me about them. I've got catalogues and sketchbooks of ideas. I always carry a sketchbook – and I use it to catalogue things that I see and I use it to sketch things I invent."

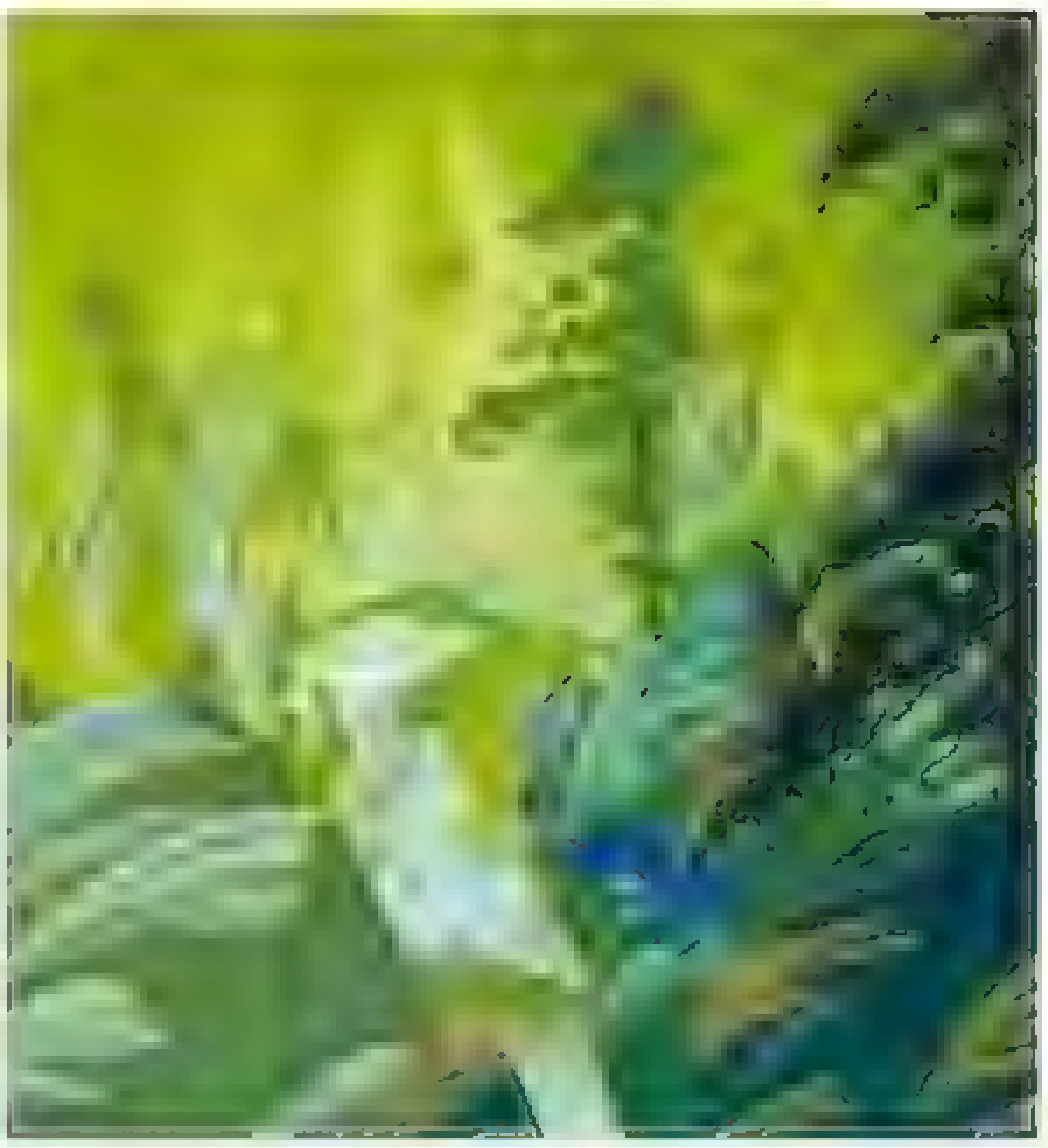
But what about working with clients – Yes, for instance? "What I do is talk to the band about what ideas inspired them to write the music they write, and I try and tap into the same idea source – the same fountain of ideas, whatever."

with no room to breathe. I spent the first couple of weeks in a big studio with lots of students painting a naked lady. Which – four days after my 17th birthday – was hugely embarrassing. And it's almost impossible to draw somebody if you don't look at them. In the middle of that, my principal walked in and asked if there was anyone called 'Roger Dean'. He then said in front of everybody that I wasn't meant to be there. And his reason was that I had maths and physics. And he didn't think artists should have maths and physics. So I went on to do industrial design."

A BOXY FUTURE

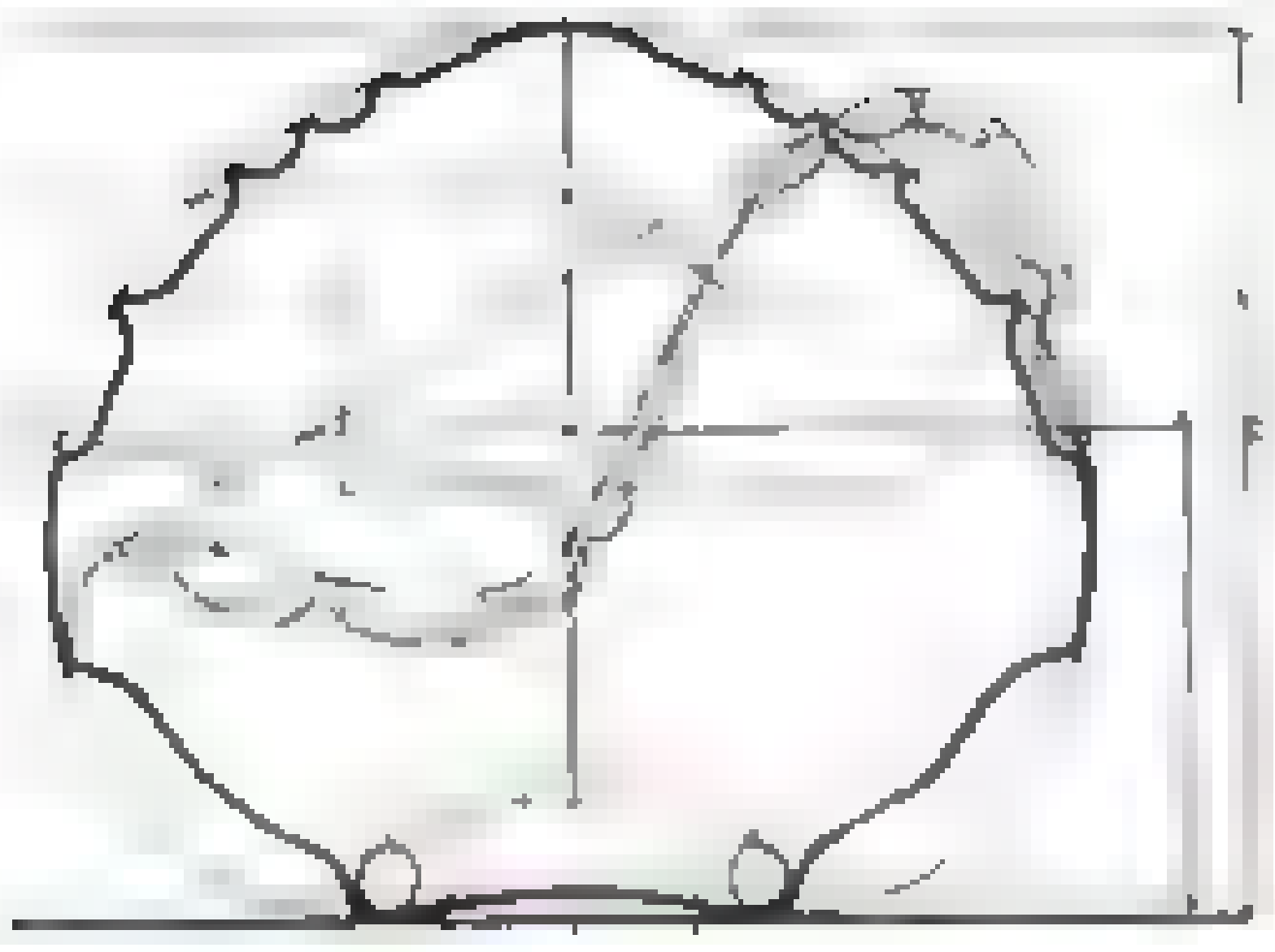
Roger's vision of designing the future continued through his industrial design course, challenging conventions and, in our chat anyway, referencing the ideas of Le Corbusier. "At the time, what appalled me is that you could design the future provided you made it a box," he says. "Whether it was a piece of graphic design, a home, a piece of electronics, everything was a box. And that view of the future was appalling: that minimalist, utilitarian, frankly boring-beyond-belief view of the future was unacceptable to me. So I set about asking people why."

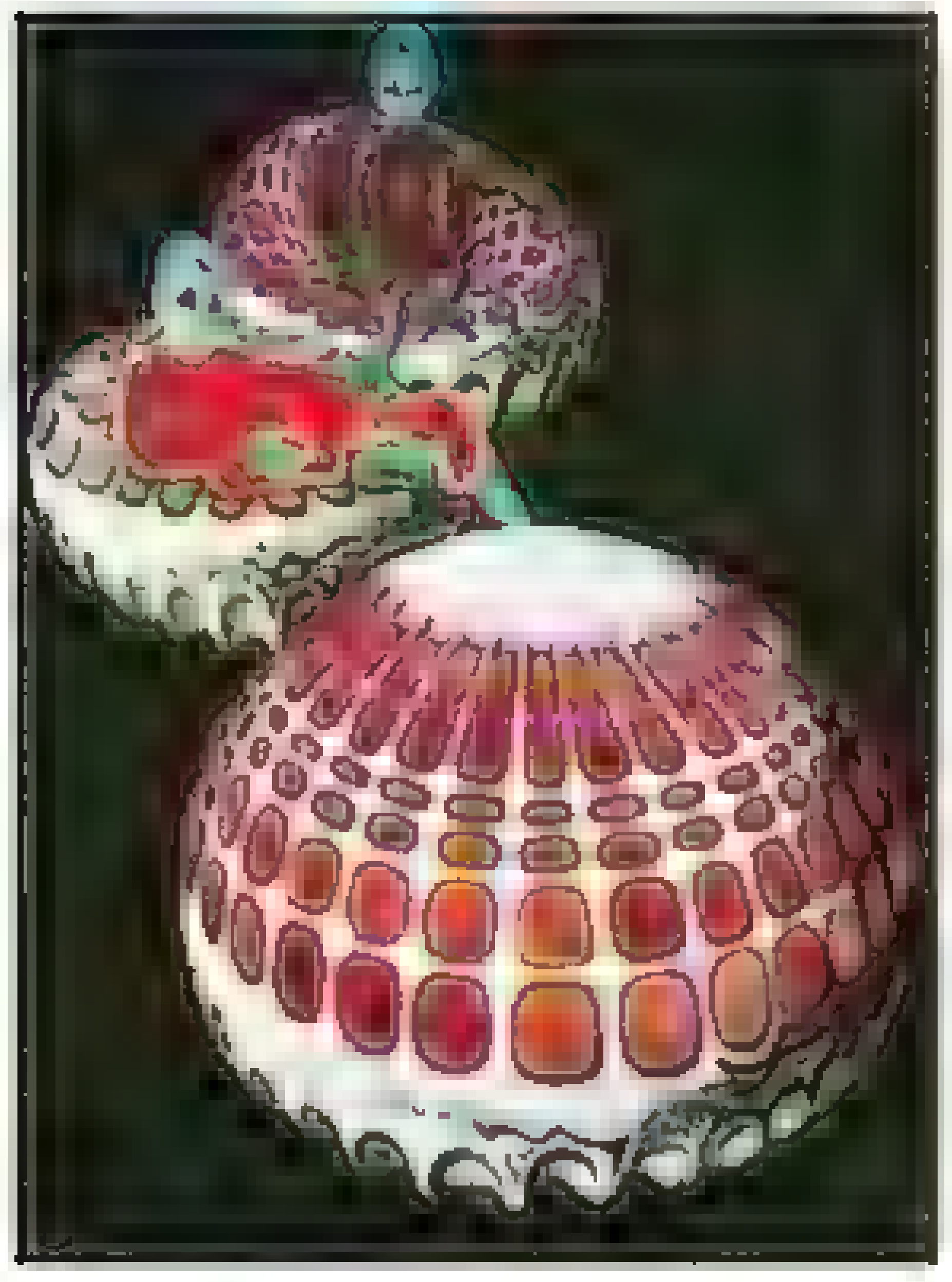
The artist furthered his studies at the Royal College of Art Furniture School, once again pursuing his idea of challenging what the future would look like. "I spent my three years researching the psychology of the built environment – it's what I did my thesis on," he says. "But David Pye, who assessed my masters degree, did nudge me from time to time saying, 'Why don't you do a bit of furniture – you're in the furniture school after all'." So Roger designed the now iconic Sea Urchin chair – a piece of furniture that brought him a lot of attention at his final show.



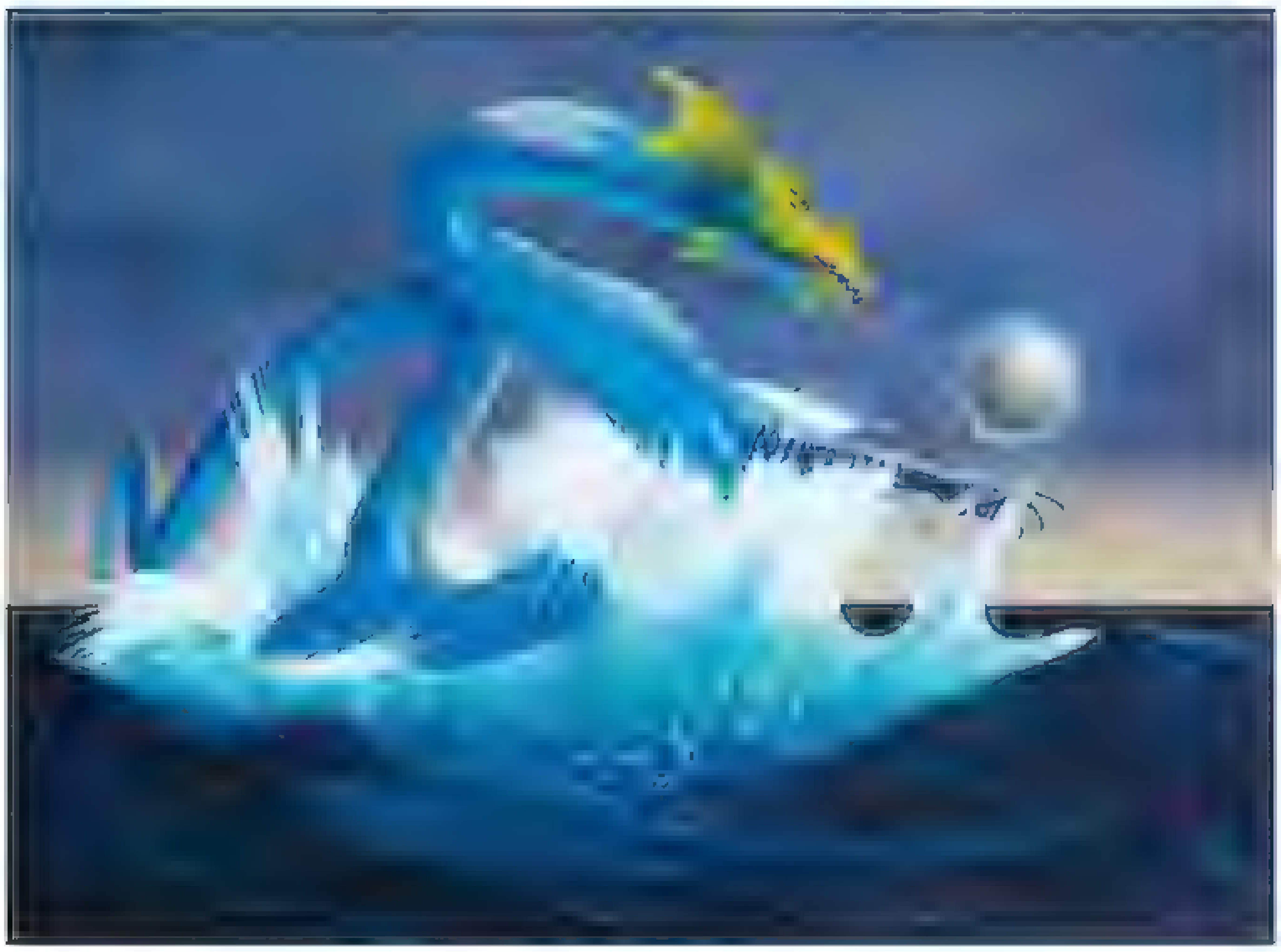
FLY FROM HERE

"This painting was started in 1970 and left for 40 years before being finished this year for the new Yes album."





SEA URCHIN CHAIR
The artist designed this eye-catching piece of furniture as part of his final show at the Royal College of Art



ASIA DRAGON
"The challenge here was to create a painting for the band Asia that would be unlike anything that I'd done for Yes. Both the album and the painting were hugely successful I'm considering painting a variant for its 30th birthday."

He was soon commissioned to refurbish the discothèque for Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club. "They asked me if I would do something radical like I'd shown in the Sea Urchin chair," he says "But they didn't have any time – we had a month. And that was a month to design, build and fit – a hell of a challenge But we did it. And I remember Ronnie Scott, Pete King and Jimmy Parsons, who was working there, were looking around and I wanted to show them what it could have been if only we had time. So I showed them my sketchbook. They weren't particularly interested in the furniture that might have been, but they were very interested in the paintings and drawings in my sketchbook, and asked me if I would do a cover for an album they were just about to release for a band they managed called Gun"

> I enjoyed making the covers and showing people what things might be – sneaking in architectural and landscape ideas

And so began Roger's career as an artist that changed the perception of album art. Along with Storm Thorgerson, he's often credited as being the man who elevated it into a higher art form. When asked on whether that was ever the intention, Roger is typically humble. "No. But it's what I became aware of," he says. "From time to time I worked on projects with Storm Thorgerson. I was at college with him and in the same building. I worked alongside him pretty much from day one. I would say the two of us made a big impact – not alone though, there were others"

In 1971, the artwork for Afro-pop outfit Osibisa's Flying Elephants proved a big success for Dean – the artist then using that painting to convince the head of Big O posters – Peter Ledeboer – to publish posters of his work. "They sold in huge, huge quantities," says Roger "And in the end it produced much more of an income than the original album designs."

THE YES MAN

But of all of Roger's work, it's his paintings and designs for Yes that are his most celebrated. The hand-drawn logo for the band now sits – along with many of the artist's other work – in the permanent collection at the V&A. It's a piece of rock history; a piece of iconic graphic design, a piece that was sketched on a train from London to Brighton

The creation of that Yes logo began some time earlier, however, while working simultaneously on covers for prog rockers Clear Blue Sky and Gun Out of necessity Roger turned his hand to logo design "When I did the cover for Gun a graphic designer friend did the graphics for me, but she went off to India, so I had to do them myself and I didn't have a clue. I did two paintings, but I had no idea how to do typesetting. So I had to draw it" His bluff was to knock them out with a painting and delay the logo issue but… "they looked at it and said 'Handwritten … cool!'."

After falling into logo design with Gun and Clear Blue Sky, Roger approached his first cover for Yes, the 1971 release Fragile, with confidence. He created the logo for this album "in the style of turn-of-the-century illustrated books". But he knew he could do better, and in his sketchbook – which to this day he still keeps with him wherever he goes – on a train journey to Brighton from the capital, he created Yes's iconic logo. "The band were so pleased with it, when they next asked me to do a cover, they wanted just that on the cover So Close To The Edge had a painting inside, but not on the cover"

By this time, Roger admits he was trapped in a career that he never intended to be in – but one he liked immensely "I enjoyed working with bands, I enjoyed making the covers. I enjoyed showing people what things might be – sneaking in architectural ideas, showing people landscape ideas," he says.

Today, Roger remains as busy as ever His work is in the process of being turned into a mobile app where you can explore his futuristic visions in 3D, and he has numerous other architectural and creative projects on the go (but he can't tell us about any of them, though). His career may have followed a slightly different path to what he imagined when at the RCA studying furniture all those years ago, but one thing's for sure: his unique visions are every bit as mind-blowing today as they were when they first appeared at 12x12 inches 40 years ago.

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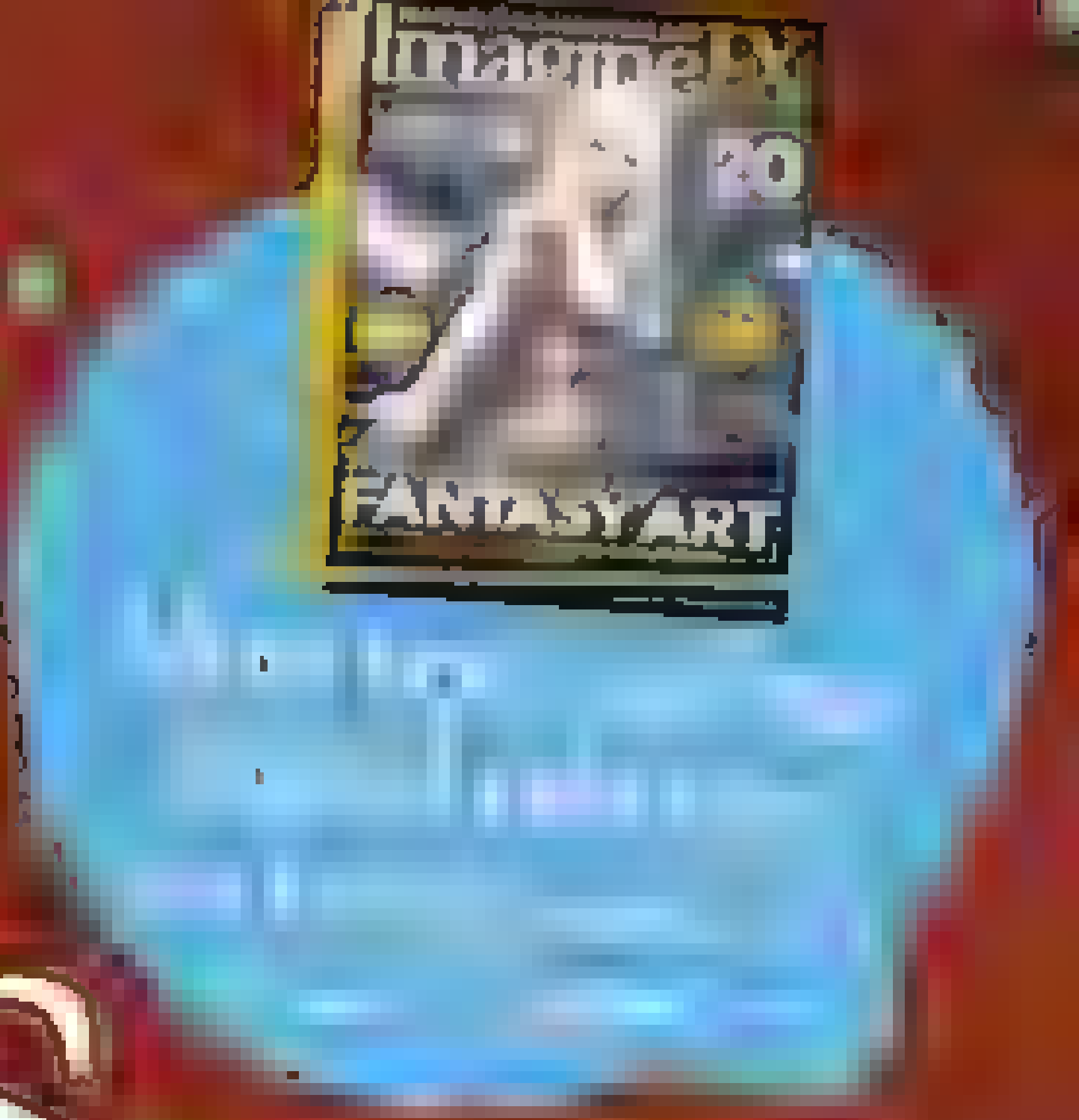

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX

Back issues

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Issue 68 April 2011

DYNAMIC
ONLY AVAILABLE DIGITALLY

Discover how to use perspective in your art, create traditional-looking images and punch up your battle scenes. We also chat to concept artist Joel Chang, whose work [illegible]. This edition is now only available digitally – buy it at zinio.com/imaginefx/single

Issue 69 May 2011

An epic new size, an epic poster and some of the art world's greatest legends giving you advice on creating epic landscapes – did we mention the theme was epic? We also talk to Dylan Cole, the matte painter and concept artist who worked on a small art-house film called Avatar.

Issue 70 June 2011

Andrew Jones, James Gurney and Marta Dahlig are just three of the artists who share the secrets behind their distinctive art, while top art directors reveal what they look for in a portfolio – get yourself on the fast track to that dream job! And a reader receives one-to-one tuition in Art Class!

Issue 71 July 2011

Once your eyes have recovered from seeing our Brightest Cover Ever!!!, learn how to paint dynamic manga characters and panels. We also cover concept art, Photoshop textures and filters, and painting the clothed figure in our packed workshop section. And find out what's new in Painter 12!

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Issue 72 August 2011

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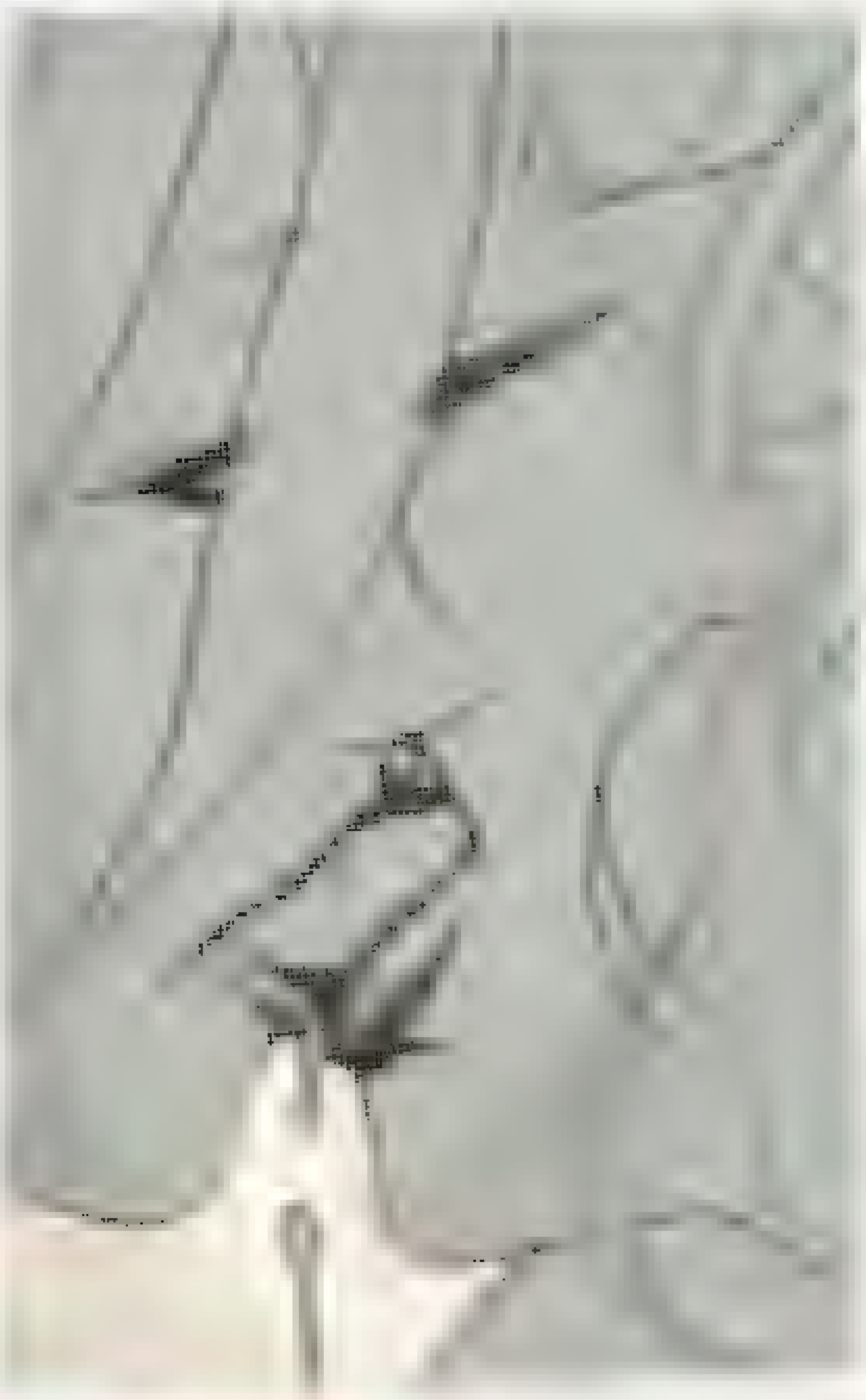
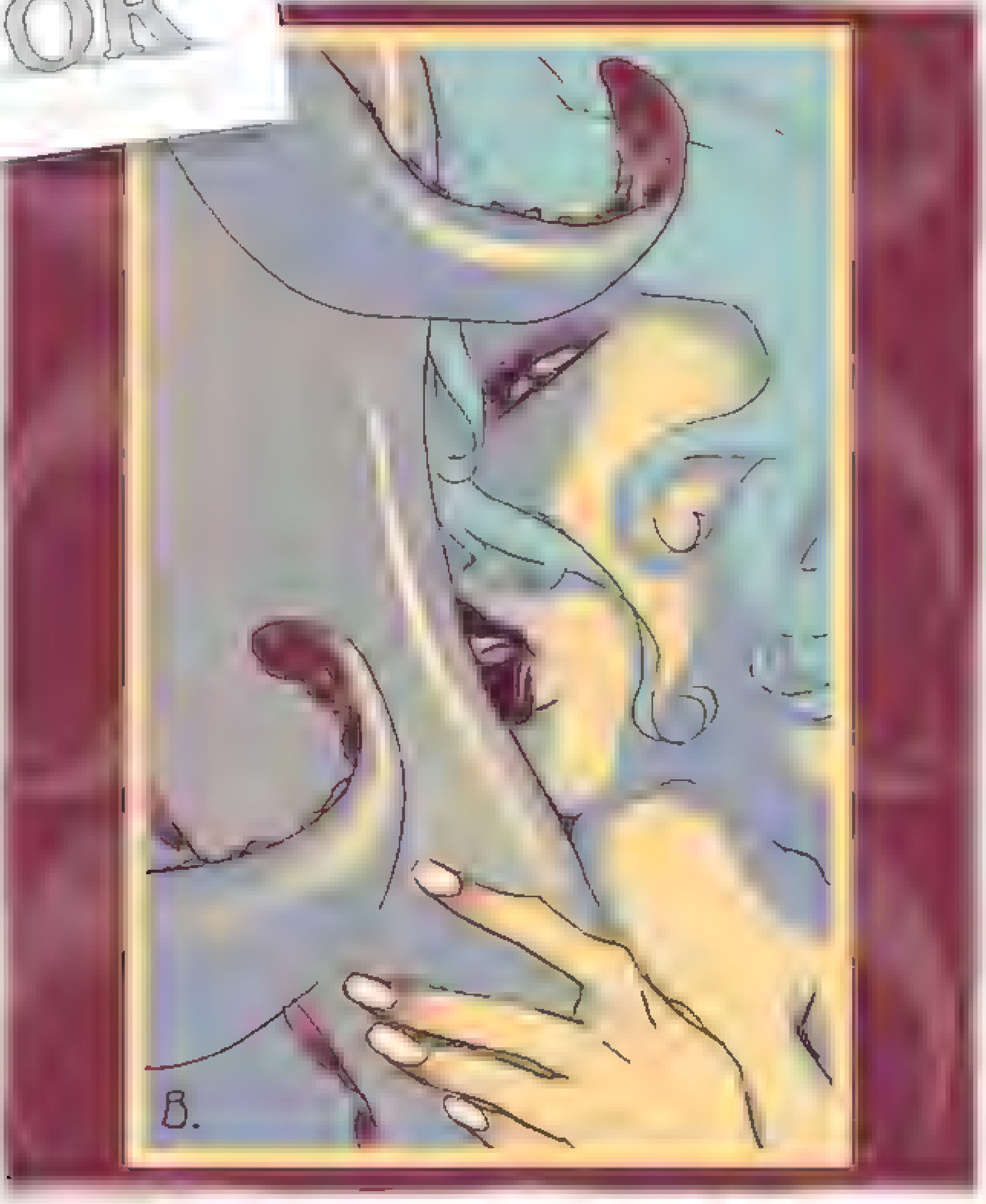
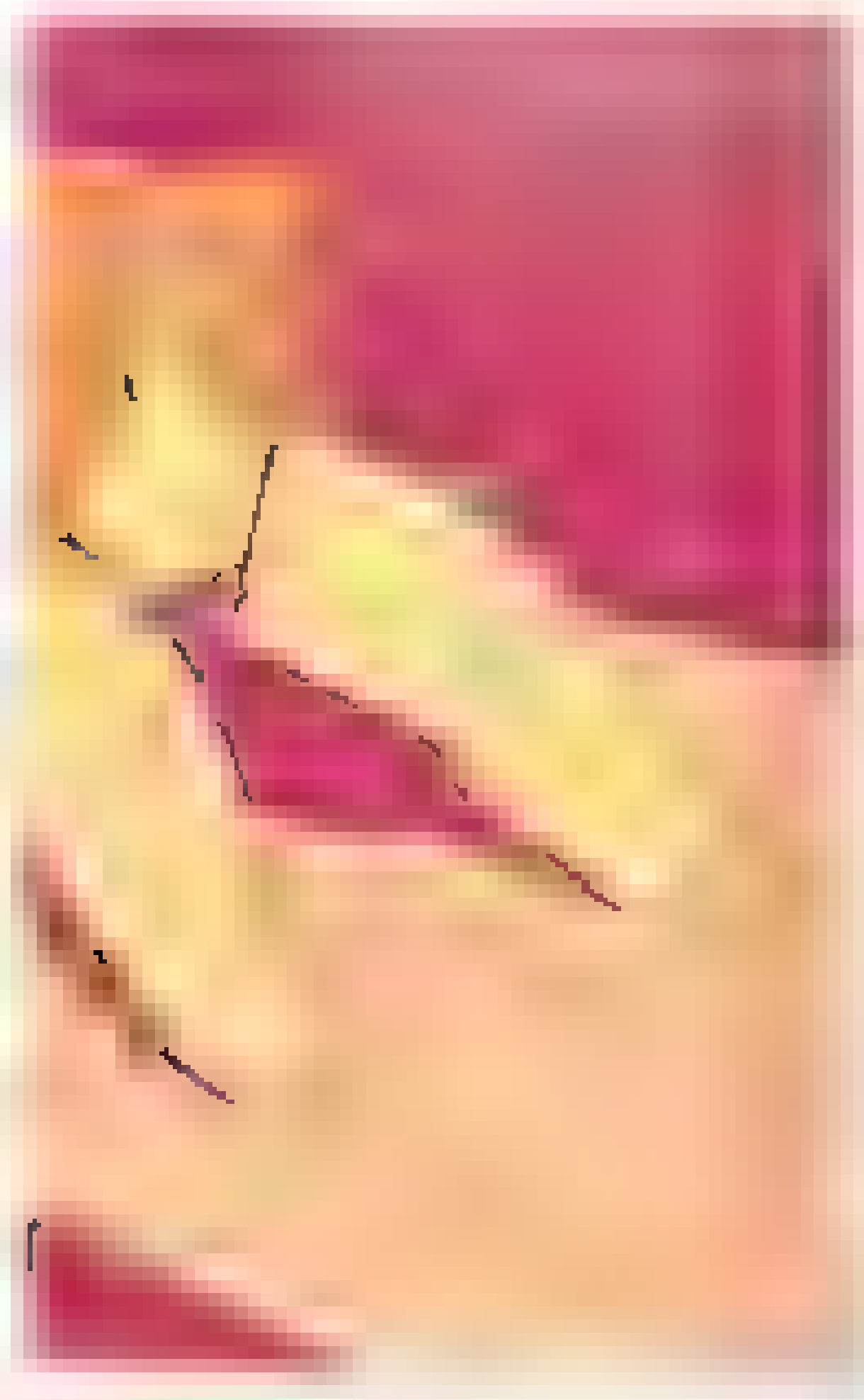






"Gorilla Artfare, a fancy site with fancy artists launched a Dirty Sunday category on their page a while ago, and I felt like participating. Here are three of the doodles that came up with."

Bengal

The French comic artist's new art book capture his most intimate fantasies in print

Most artists would jump at the chance to see their artwork published in book form. Not Bengal: "When I was offered to do the book, a couple of years ago, I didn't feel like doing it. Most of the book features stuff made during my years as a video game design artist at Darkworks, between 2002 and 2005 and I thought offering art in a book, that had been online, was dishonest."

Although Bengal walked away from the offer, it was still there on the table, several months down the line. "I later realised there's a certain pleasure in having art you like available on paper. And, of course, new readers would come to know about my art." Bengal's change of heart about the book had led to the publication of his collection of older images, along with a dozen new doodles that he'd done for his blog.

Bengal acknowledges the effect that movies and video games have had on his work, as well as one comic art form in particular: "I didn't consciously intend – and I mean this with honesty – to end up having a mixed style of European and manga. But mangas, and French and Belgian publications having been influences for years and years. To be honest, my style could not have gone many other ways."

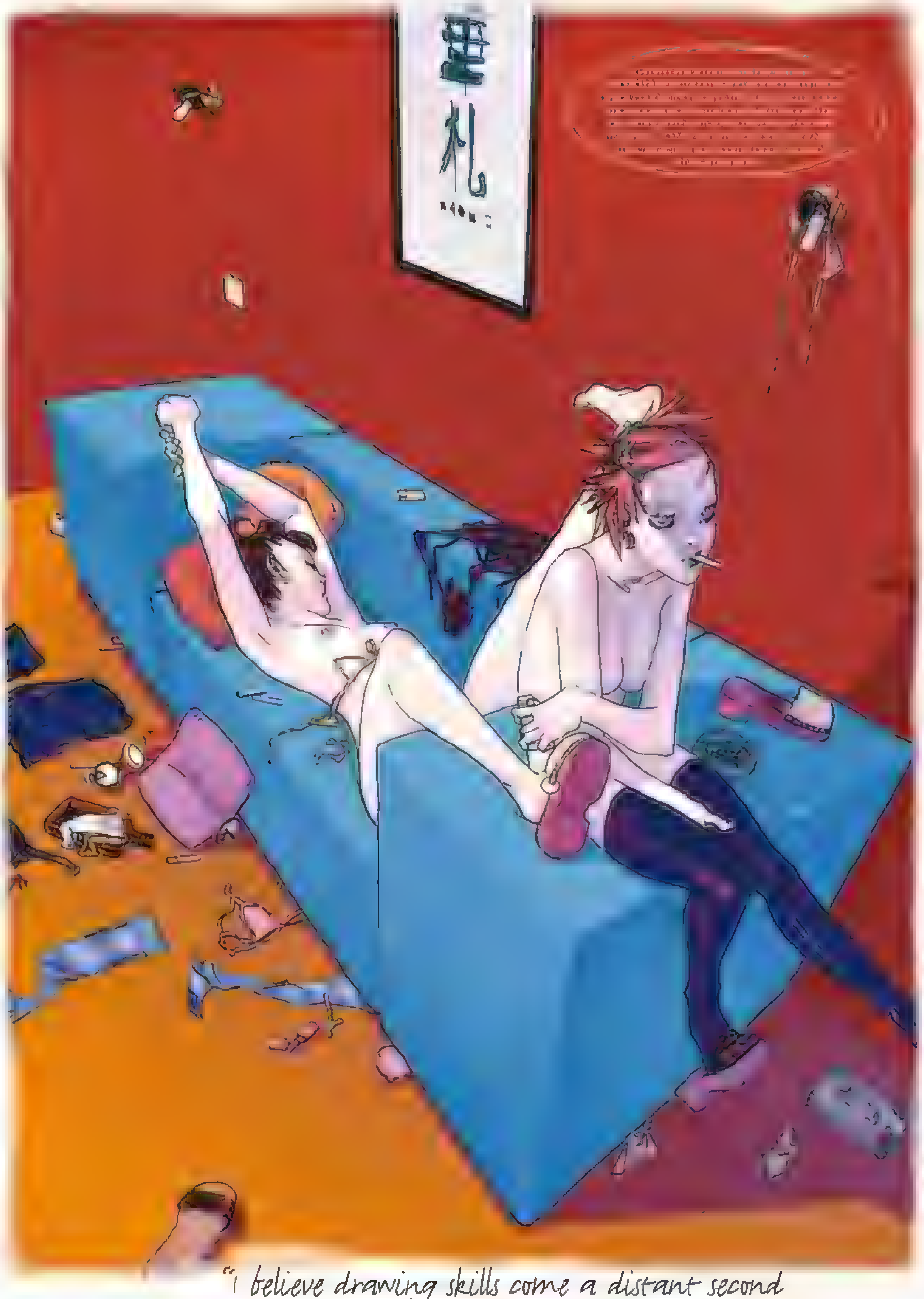
Bengal's book is not a how-to guide by any means. As the artist explains, "The aim is to get people to understand what you're telling them, and interest them. I believe drawing skills come a distant second place behind a good sense of narration. This is true for comic books as well as illustrations. There are different rules of composition, but always the same goal."

PROFILE

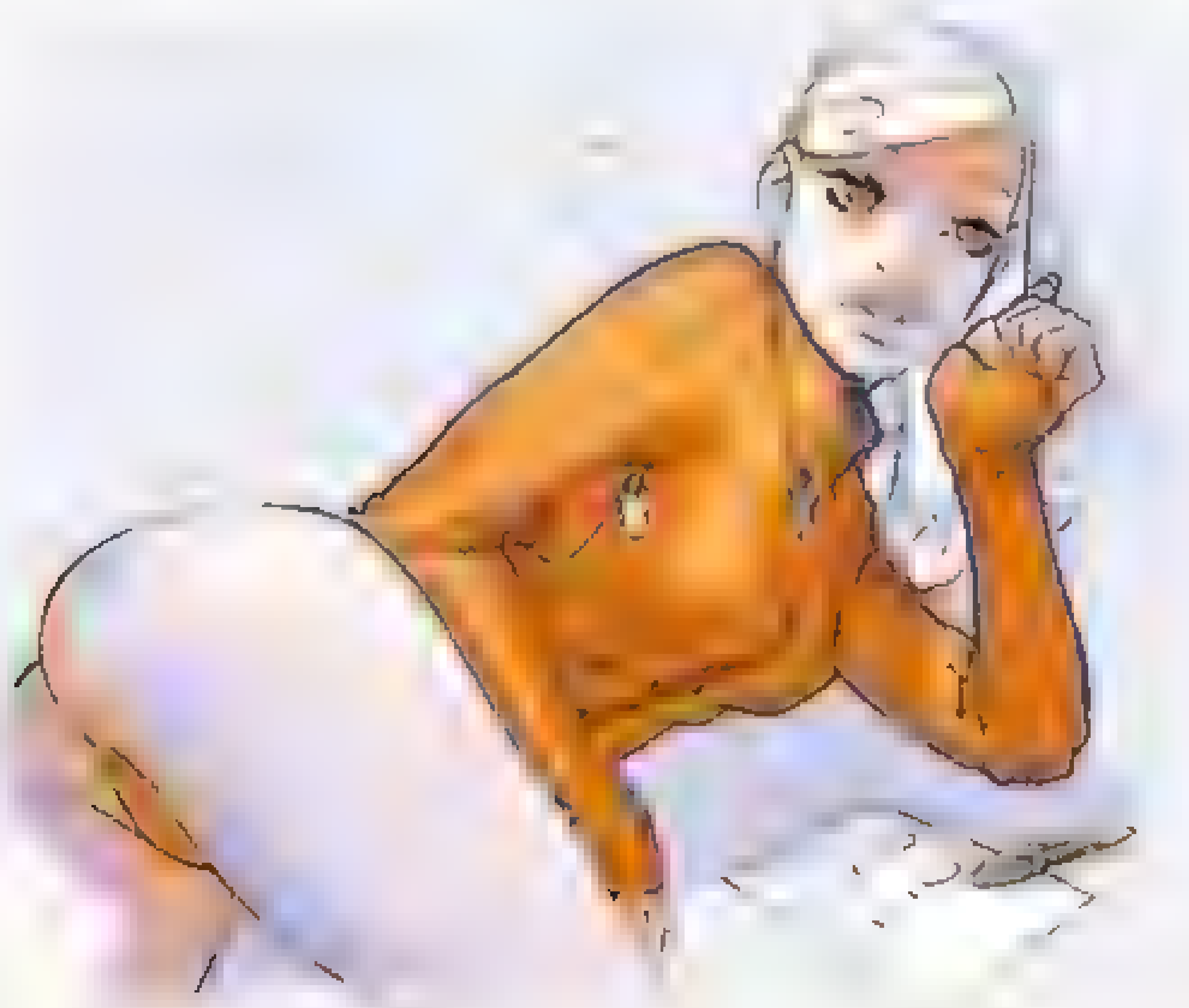
Bengal

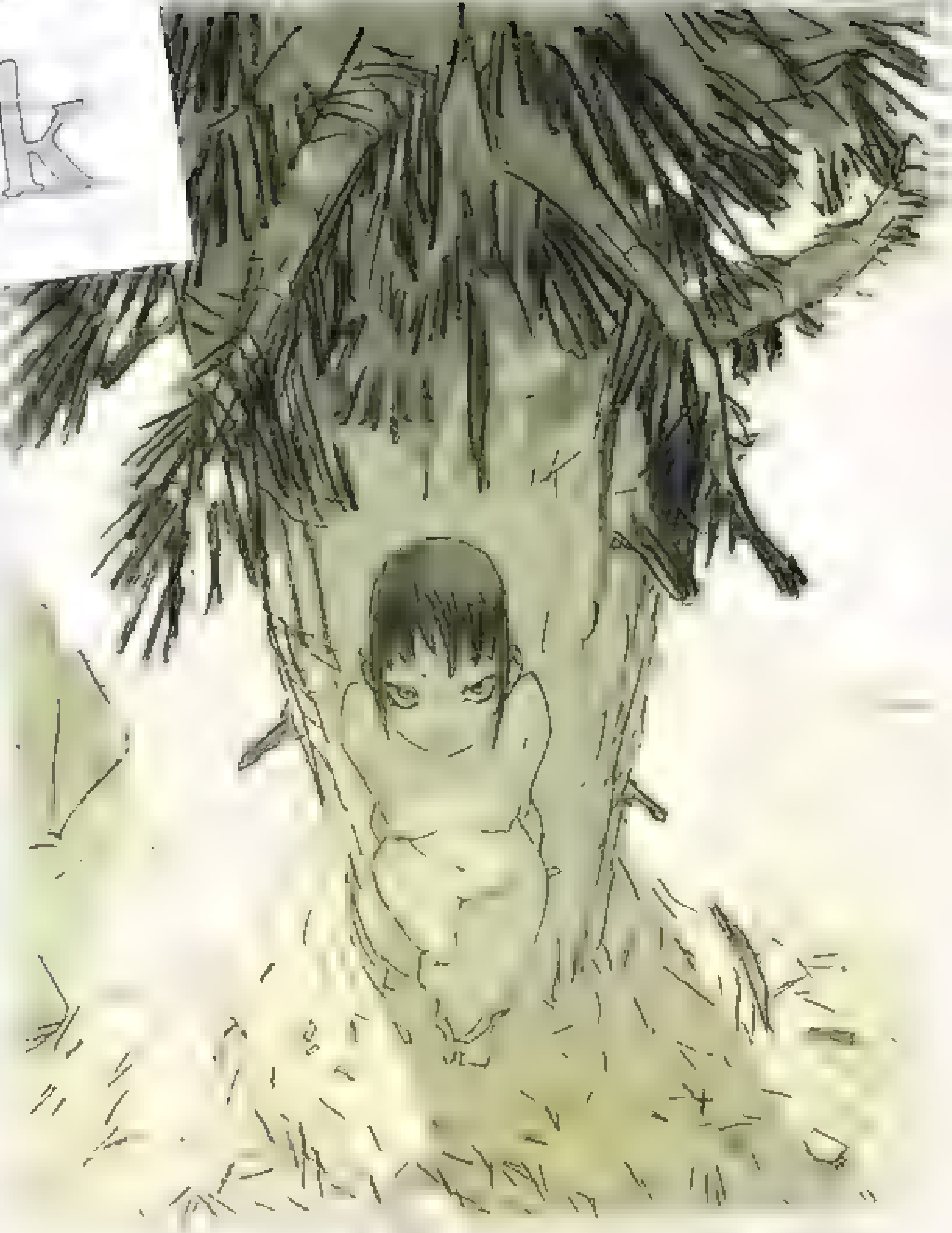
Bengal is a Paris-based comic artist with a penchant for clean, deceptively simple line drawing, and playfully explicit subject matter. This is a selection of sketches from his new art book, Sketchbook Bengal, released through Comix Buro and out now.

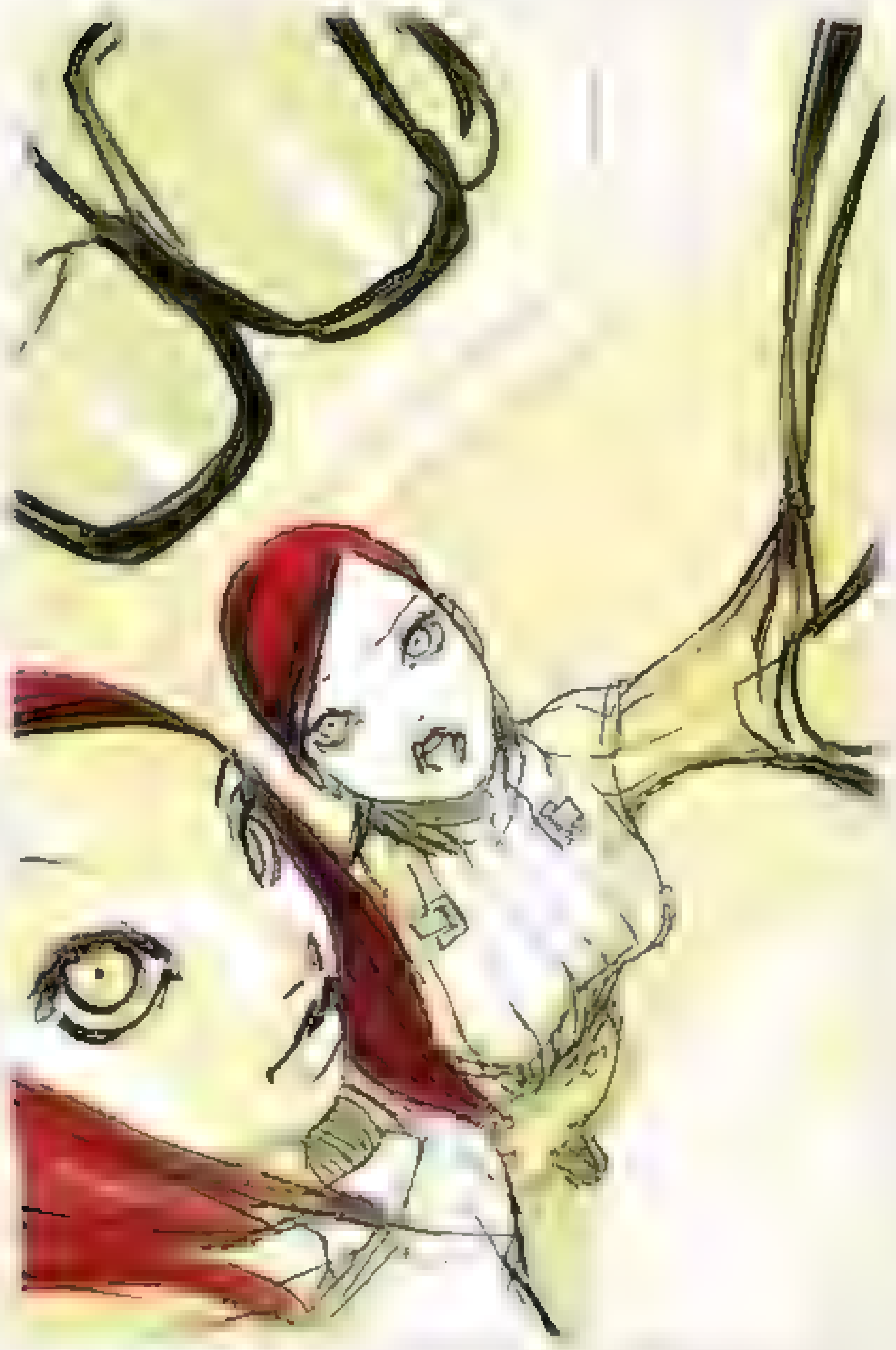
bengalsarchives.blogspot.com



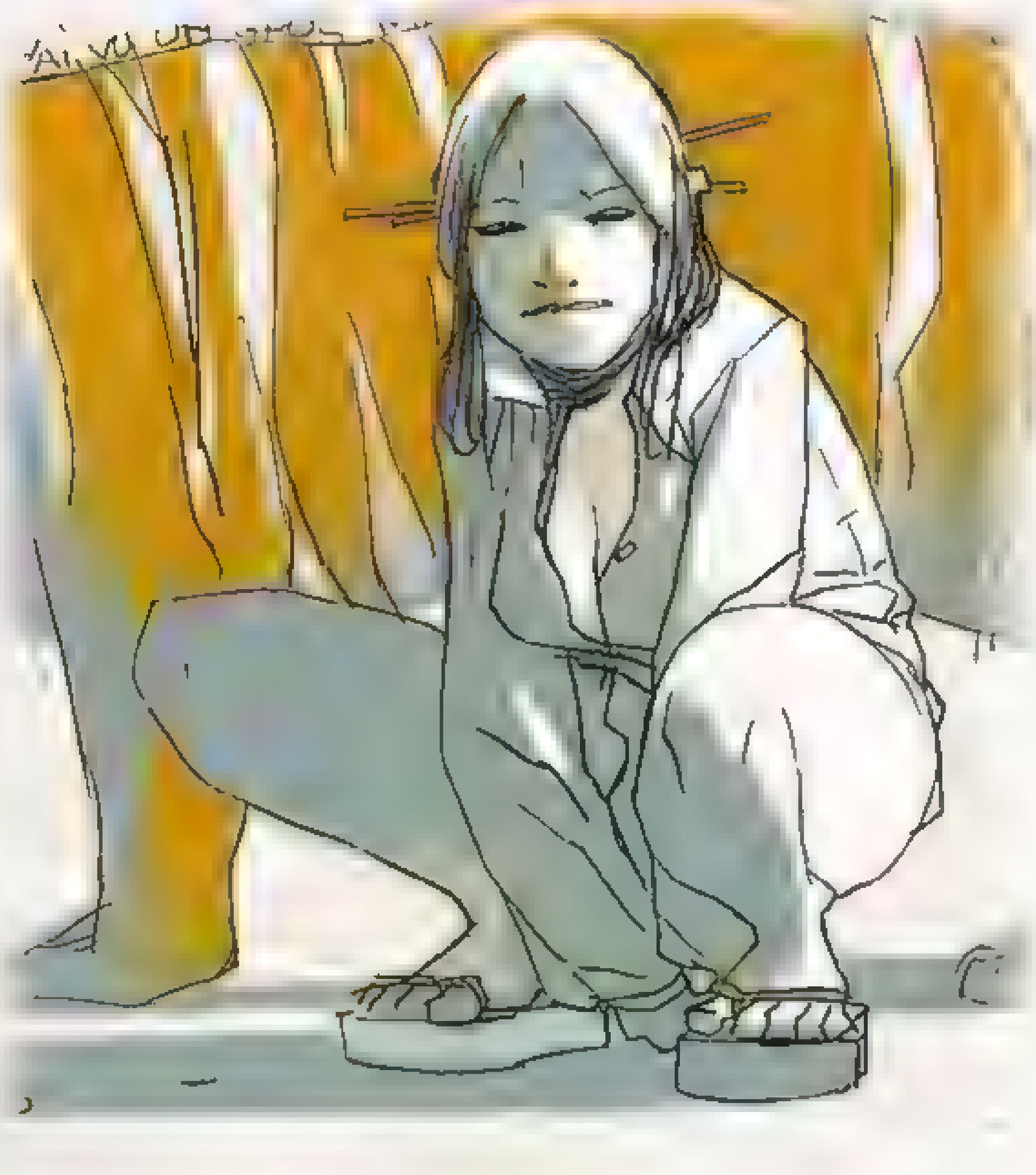
"I believe drawing skills come a distant second place behind a good sense of narration"

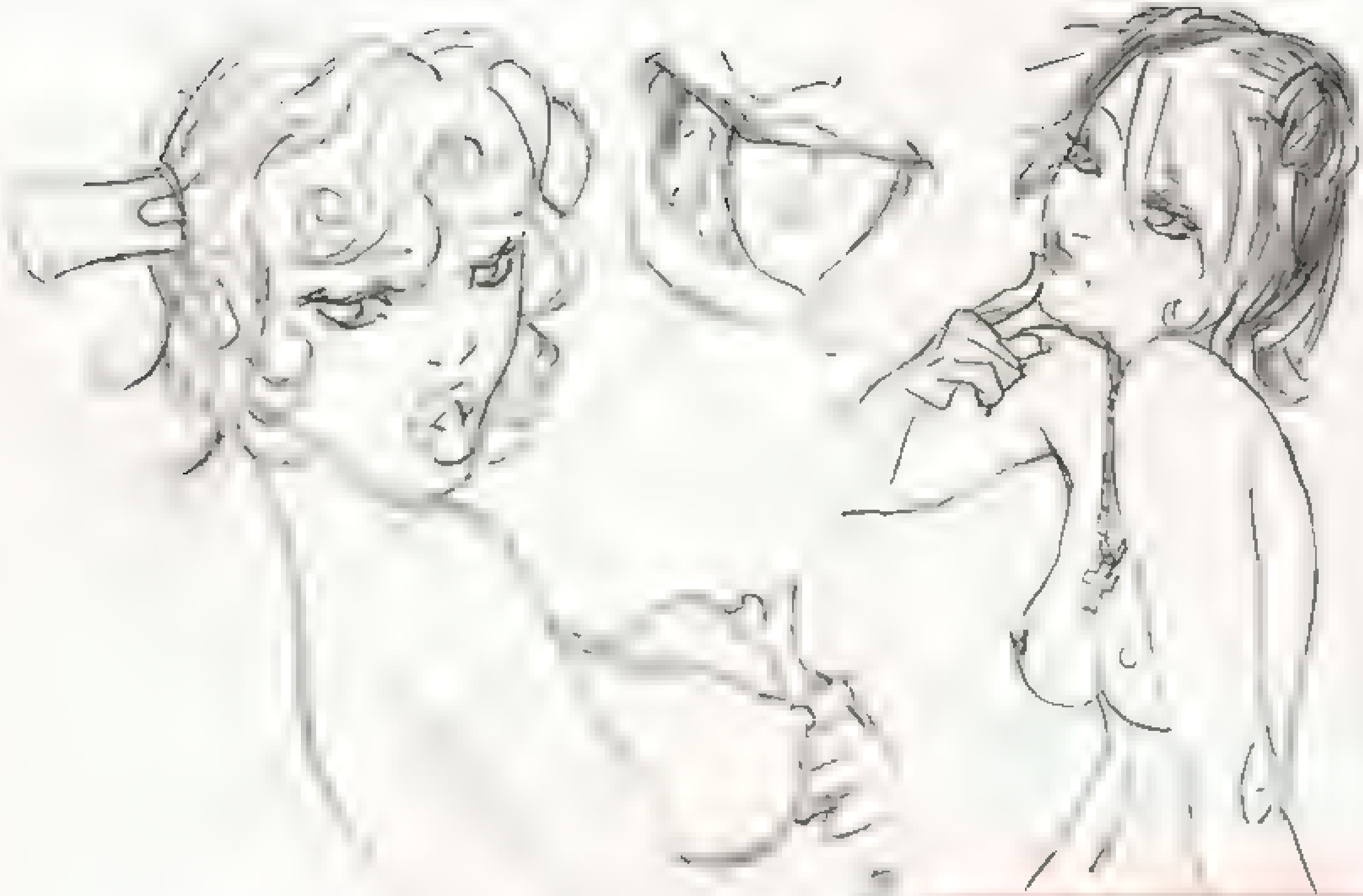






"When I was working for Darkworks as a designer I was using my free (and sometimes not so free) time to get on paper whatever came to mind. Here are just a few of the dozens I did back then."

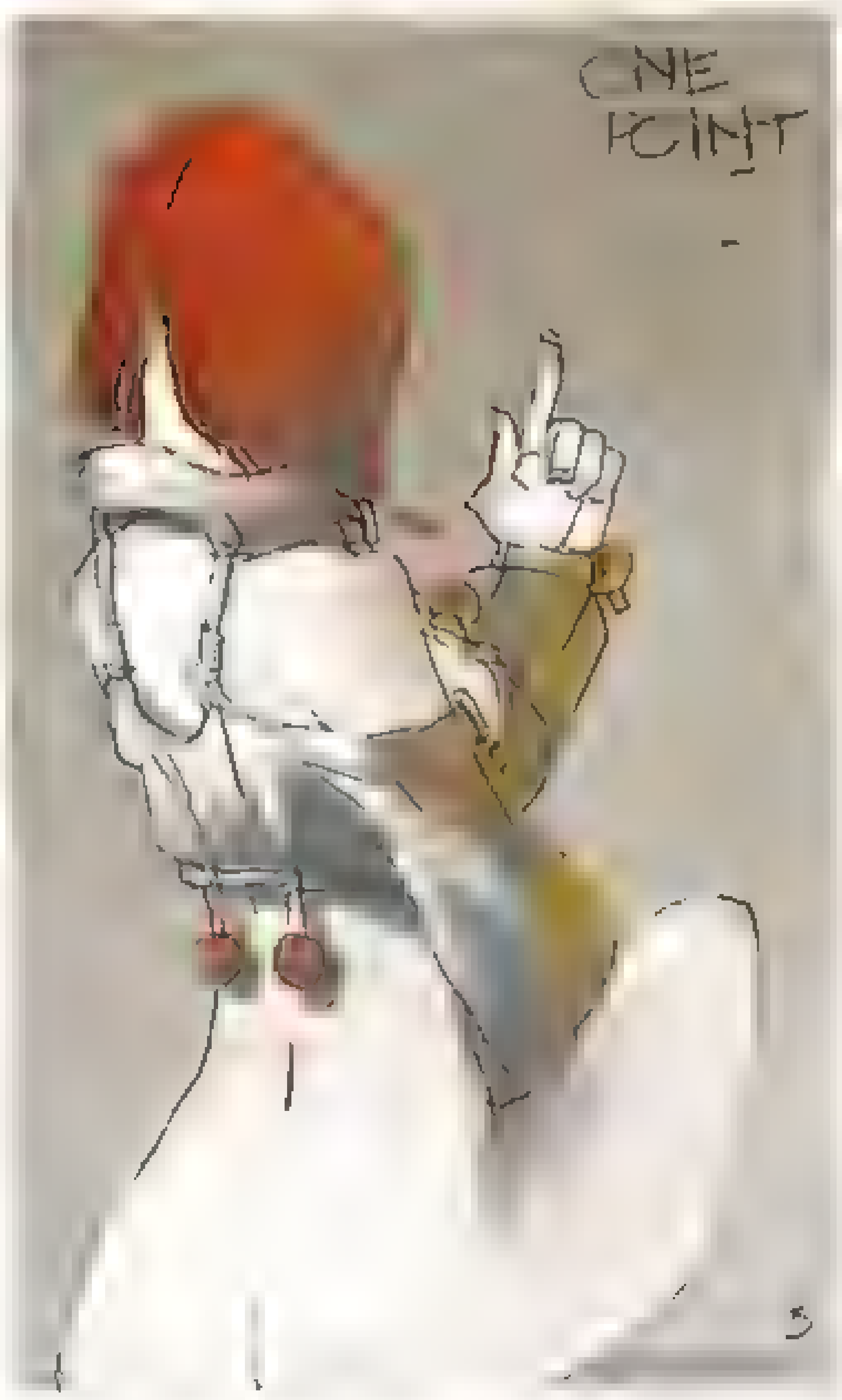


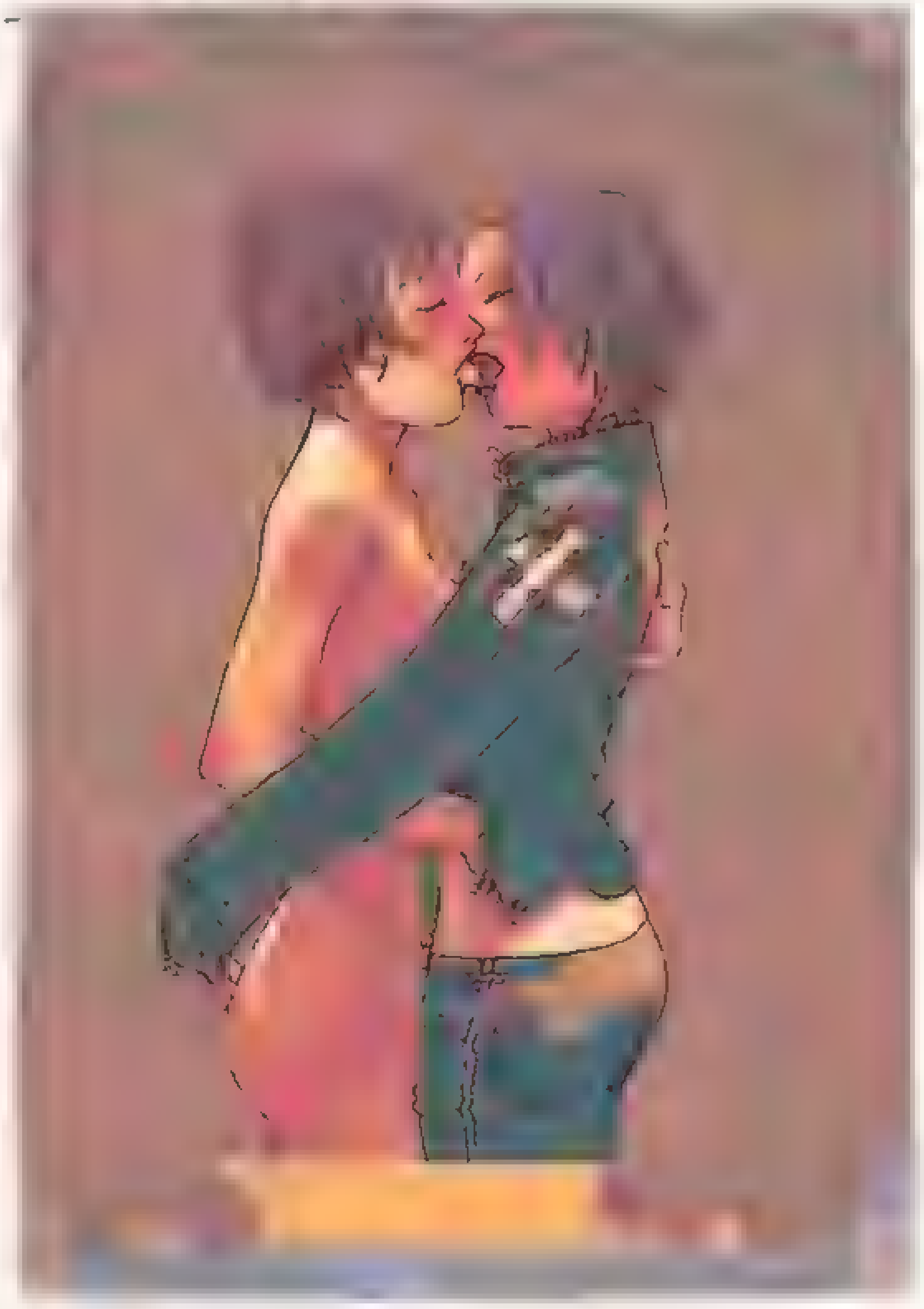


"Some random sketches you could find across my old sketchbooks, back when I was actually filling pages of those... Good memories."

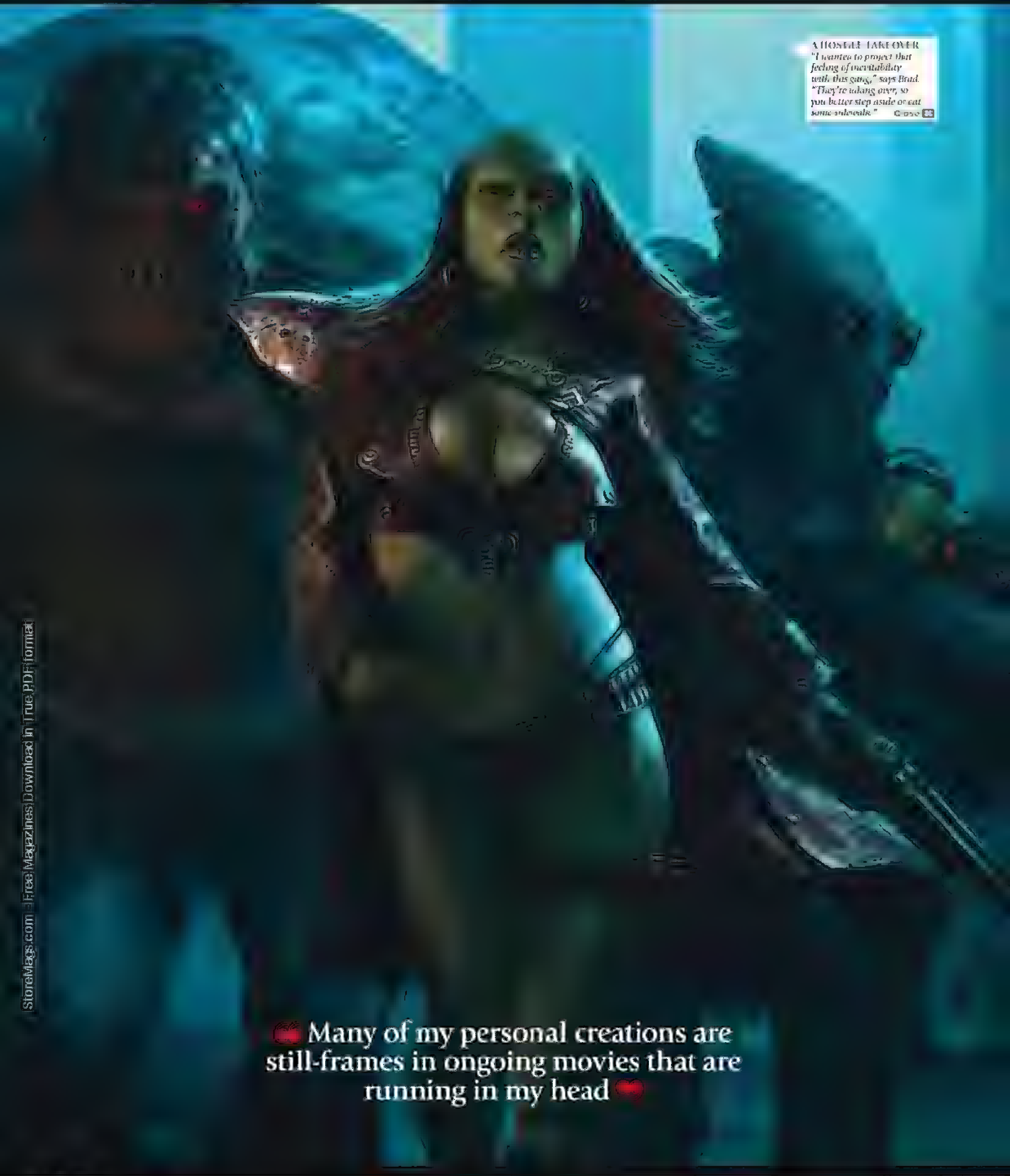
"This was done for the eatpoo.com forum's Tarot project. By a remarkable twist of fate, I picked up The Lovers (of course) and the image that I had in my mind became obvious to me."

"I was using my free (and not so free) time to get on paper whatever came to mind"





Want to share your sketches? [illegible] email at **sketchbook@imaginefx.com** [illegible]

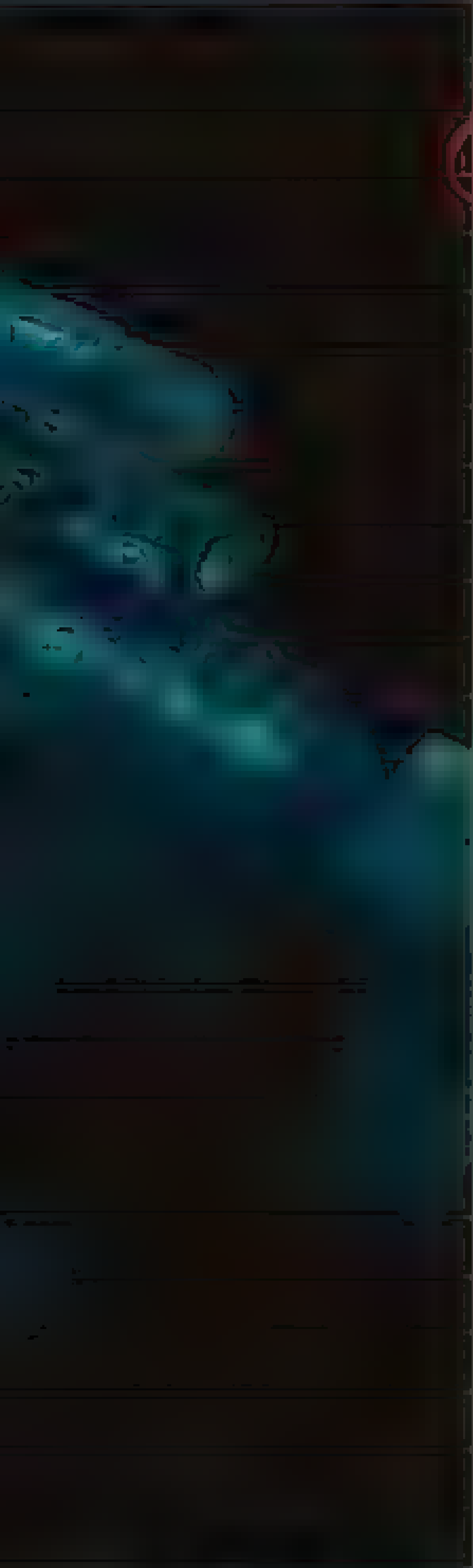


A HOSTILE TAKEOVER
"I wanted to project that feeling of inevitability with this gang," says Brad. "They're taking over, so you better step aside or eat some sidewalk." Close

Many of my personal creations are still-frames in ongoing movies that are running in my head

BRAD RIGNEY

The talented Wizards of the Coast artist discusses his own dystopian visions of the future



I'm just making art and hollering down here in the Mississippi swamps," shrugs the ever-humble Brad Rigney, best known for his menacing work for Wizards of the Coast. "I like the idea of a creepy hillbilly in grimy overalls, drawing in some dank cellar and praying to dark gods who exist outside our known reality."

It's a deliciously graphic image that fits his alias of Cryptcrawler rather well. "I love horror movies and comics, and there was always some creepy little character to introduce the stories," reflects Brad on its origins. "But there's another meaning to it," he adds. "Hopefully I'll be a little footnote in fantasy art history one day, and reach a hand out from the grave when I'm long gone."

It's a pretty morbid sentiment, but then Brad admits he's a pretty morbid kind of guy. While his roll call of influences includes Michael Komarck, Frank Frazetta and Richard Corben, his work is also heavily influenced by the cult films of Ridley Scott and John Carpenter. "The lighting and atmosphere they conjured profoundly affected me when I was starting out," he reveals.

"Many of my personal creations are still-frames in ongoing movies that are running in my head, and striking that cinematic look and feel is very much a goal of mine," Brad continues. "Maybe one day I'll be lucky enough to do movie work, but for now Wizards of the Coast is keeping me very busy, and I love every minute of it."

Entirely self-taught, he spent over eight years honing his skills before landing his first commission. It all began 13 years ago, while working in a coffee shop: "We used to play a tabletop RPG called Shadowrun," says Brad. "It's set in a Blade Runner-esque grim, dark future, and it ignited my imagination. I spent all my free time drawing scenes from the games, and the passion blossomed from there."

LISTEN AND LEARN

Despite encouragement from friends, his initial confidence took some heavy knocks from unimpressed art directors. "I got some brutal ass-kickings on the phone after I sent in my portfolio. At the time I was an impulsive, angry artist, but looking back I'm honoured to have been given the attention and critiques."

One gem of advice that made an immediate difference was to check his work against photographic references. "I've been a lifelong Frazetta fan and he never used reference, according to legend, so that's what I thought everyone did," he says. "I drew from imagination for years and years." While he remains fervently opposed to paintovers or tracing – which he regards as cheating – Brad's since learnt the value of a point of reference. "After

Artist PROFILE

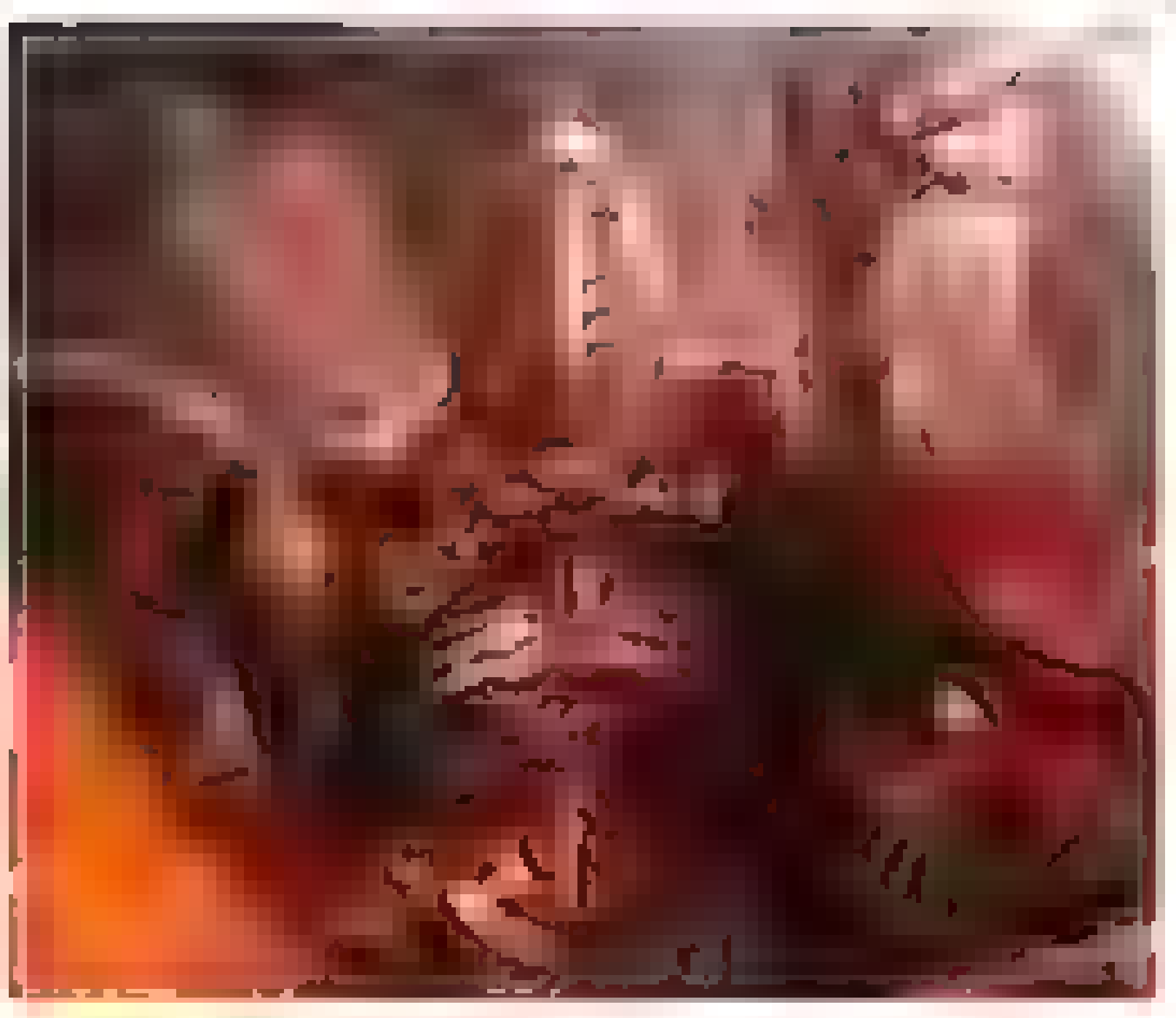
Brad Rigney

COUNTRY: US

FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Richard Corben, Frank Frazetta, Drew Struzan, John Singer Sargent and Michael Komarck

SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop

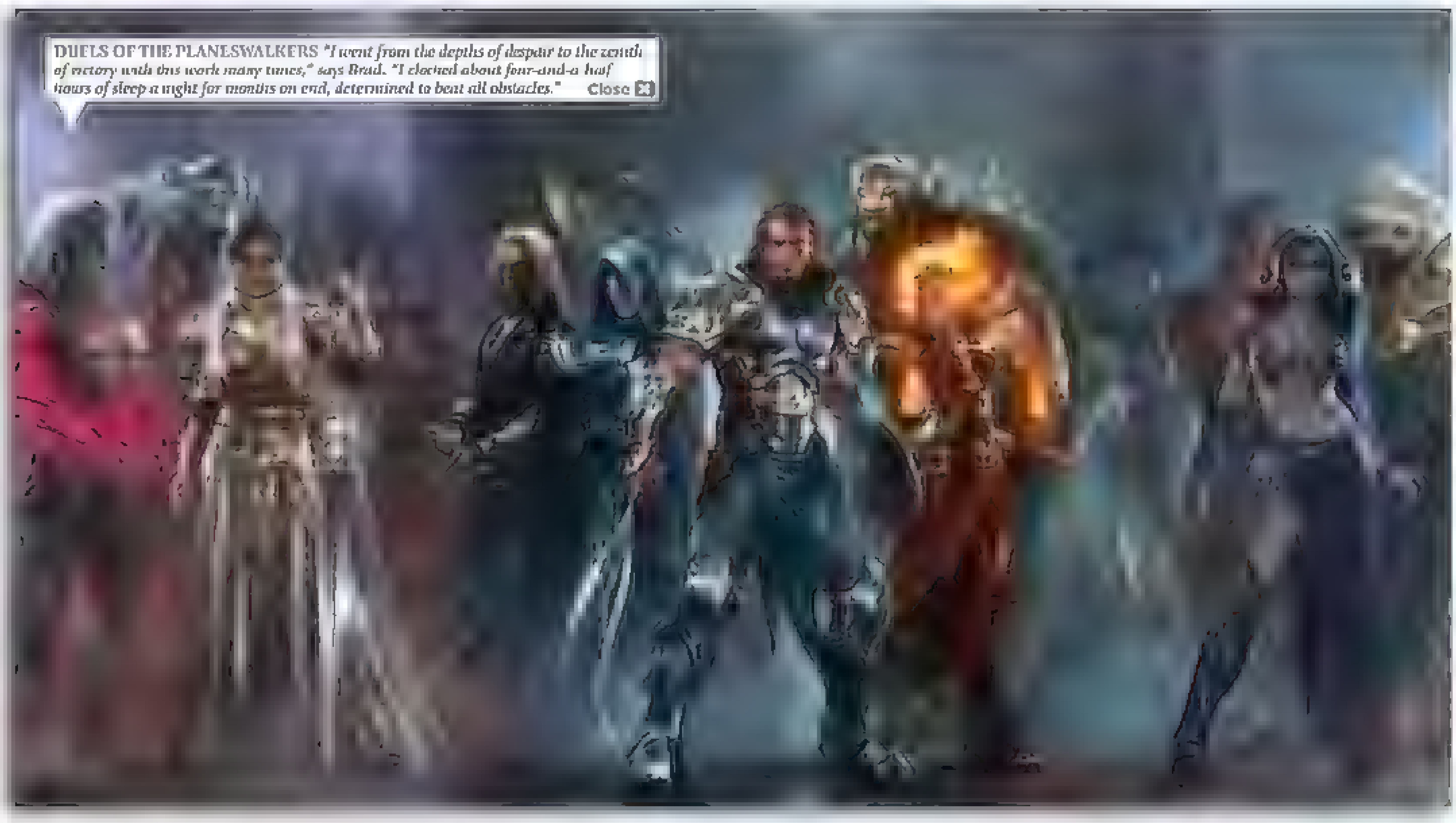
WEB: cryptcrawler.deviantart.com



APOSTLE'S BLESSING "I wanted to convey a sense of valour and heroism with this character since it's a white-aligned Phyrexian." Close

© Wizards of the Coast

Gallery



DUELS OF THE PLANESWALKERS *"I went from the depths of despair to the zenith of victory with this work many times," says Brad. "I clocked about four-and-a-half hours of sleep a night for months on end, determined to beat all obstacles."* Close ☒

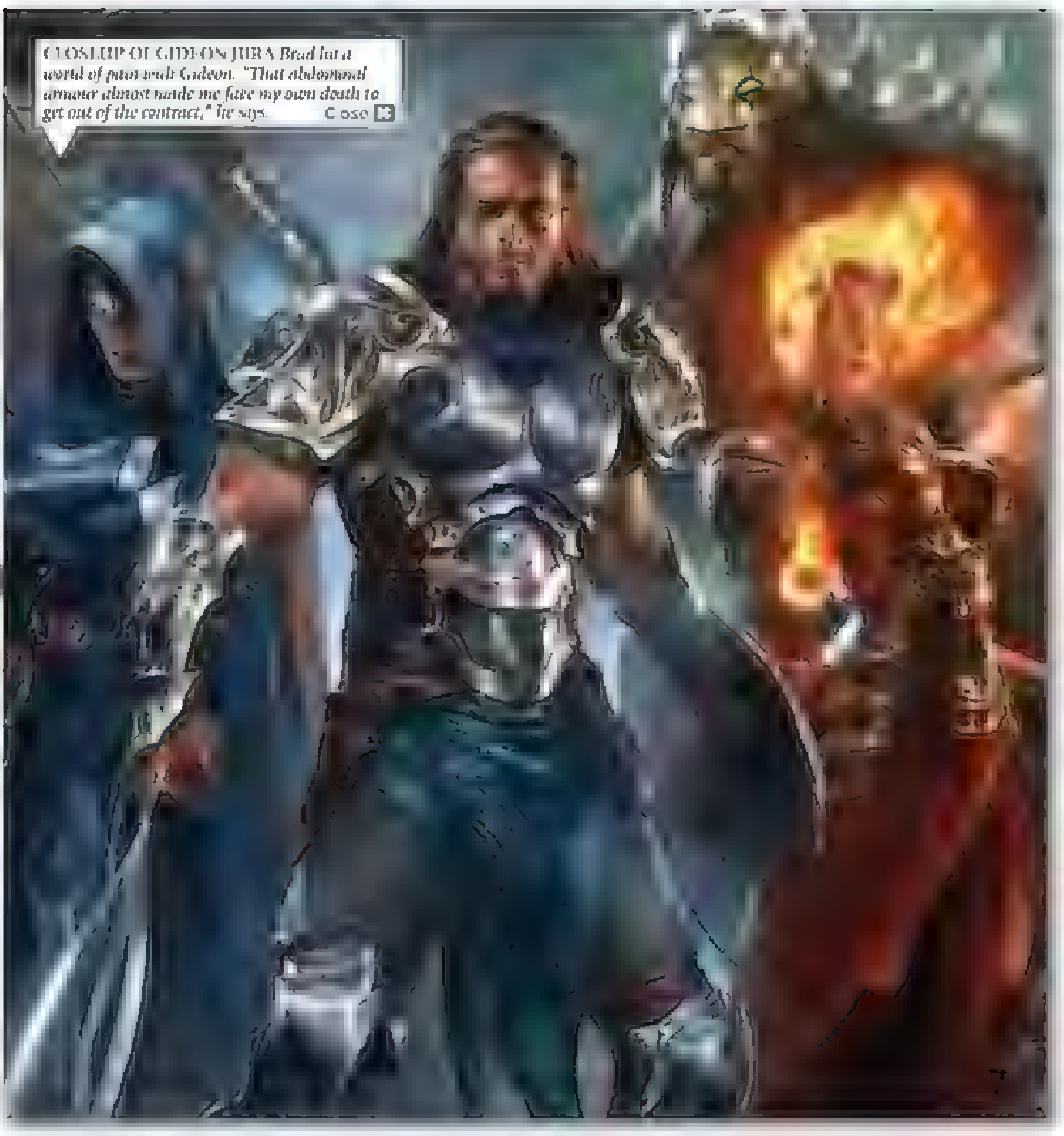
SUFFERING FOR HIS ART

Brad Rigney walks us through his hardest commission to-date

"This is without doubt the most challenging and demanding piece of art work I've ever created, but also the most rewarding and educational," says Brad of his brief from Wizards of the Coast to create the advertising artwork for Duels of the Planeswalkers 2012.

"There were no crazy angles, no wild action – just head-to-toe character studies dead on the horizon line. I had to dig deep to pull out the body language and characters and have their attitudes do the talking."

Despite the unexpected hurdles, Brad prefers commercial work. "I love the challenge of reproducing something pre-existing, but bringing something new and hopefully cinematic to it. The suits [illegible] wanted them to look real and have faces like you and me."



CLOSEUP OF GIDEON JURA *Brad had a world of pain with Gideon. "That abdominal armour almost made me fake my own death to get out of the contract," he says.* Close ☒

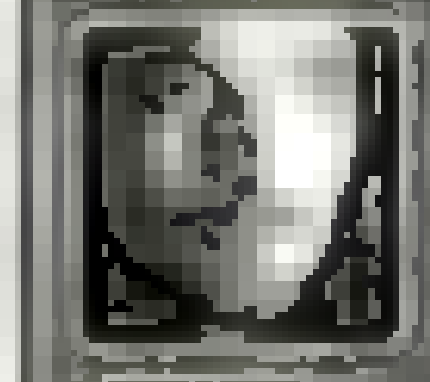
Comments

[illegible]
ImagineFX

"Character art is more than painting a cool costume on a figure. Brad takes the time to get to know his creations – what makes them tick – before putting down a brush-stroke. The results are never [illegible]."

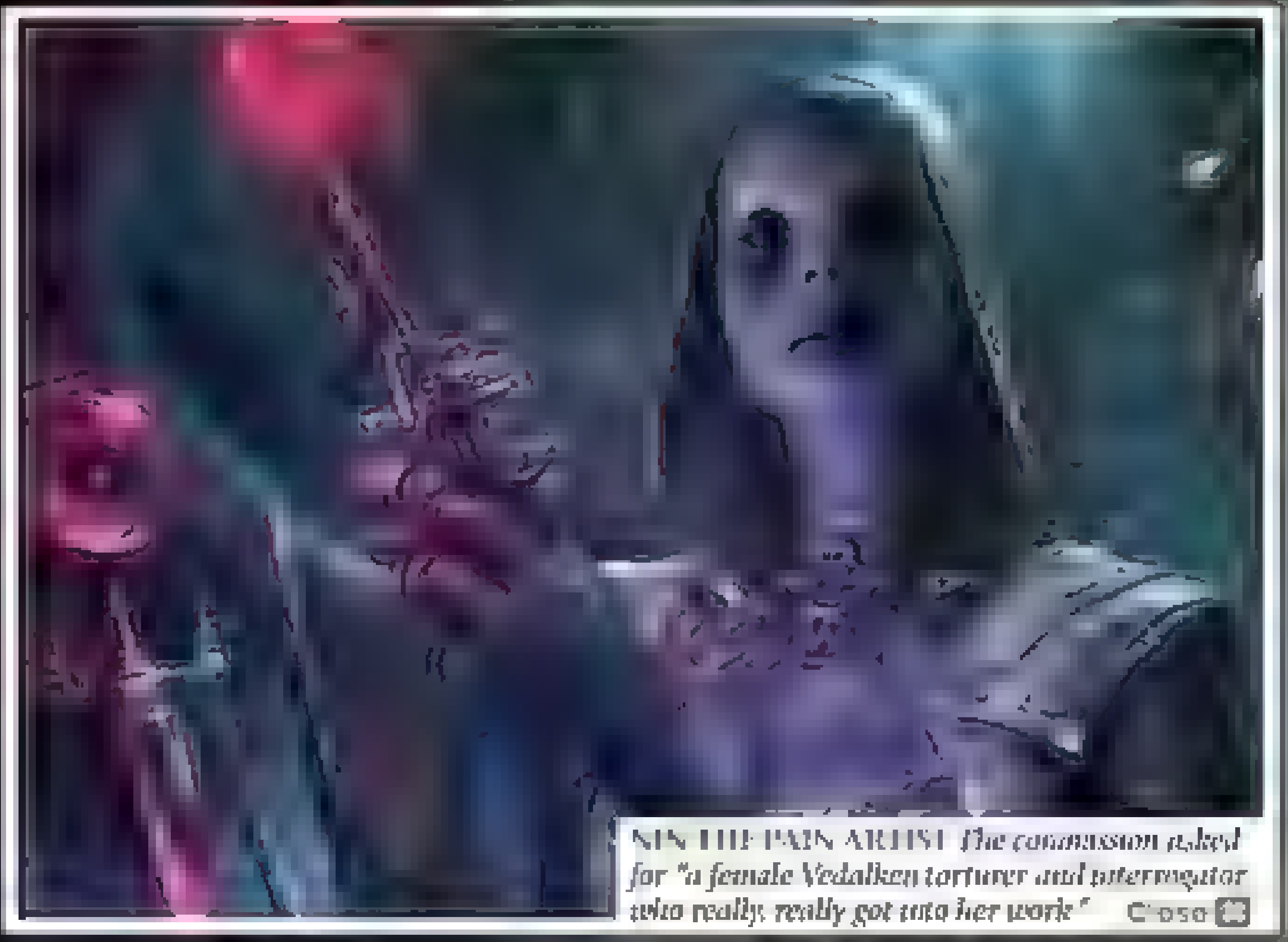
[illegible] Mandryk
Pro artist

"When I look at Brad's portfolio I see the work of a master craftsman. He fuses a juicy realistic style with a knack for interesting and engaging characters. He's meticulous without being over-detailed, and colourful without being garish. You can feel the enthusiasm bubbling through in his pictures."

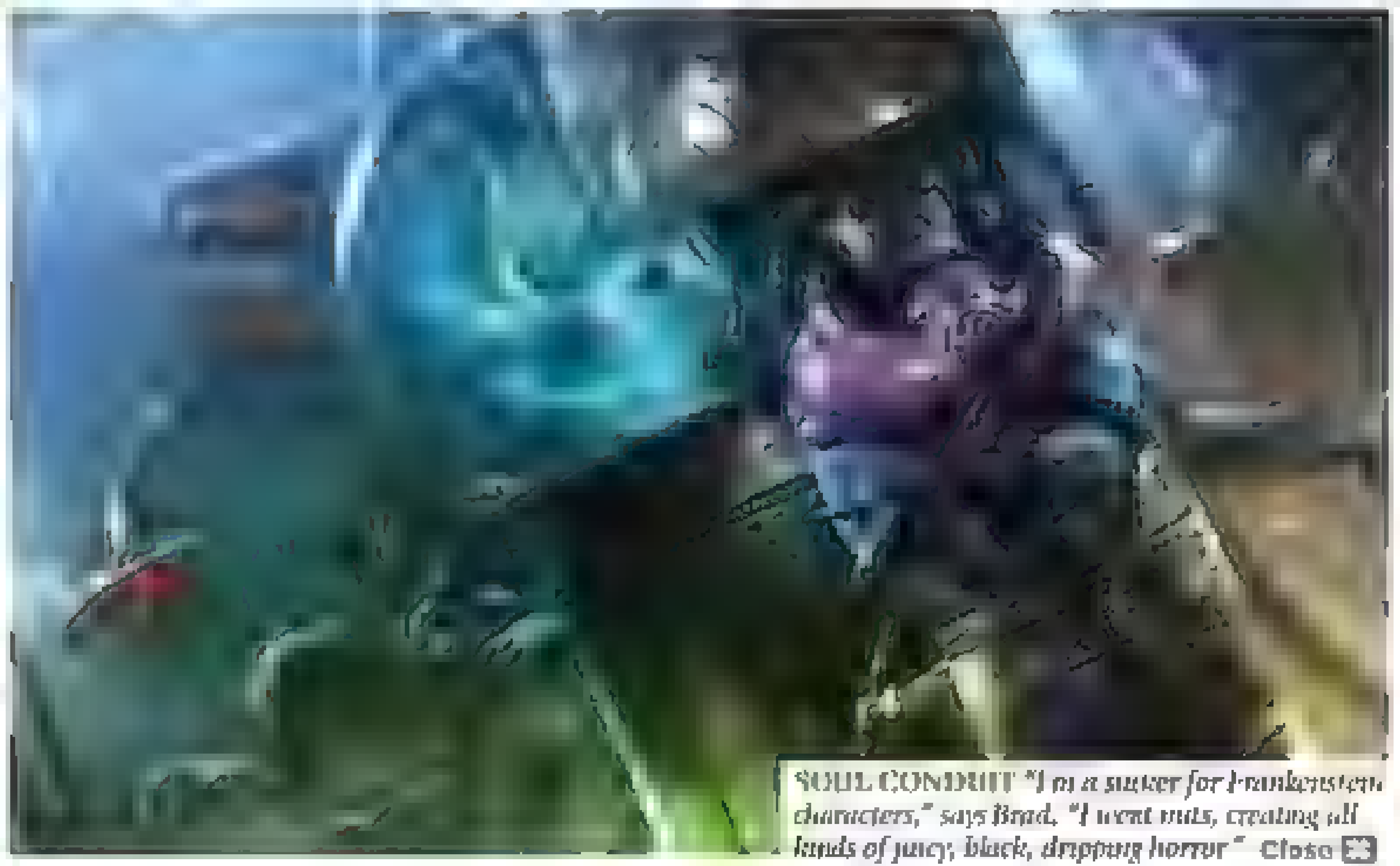


Max Hugo
ImagineFX

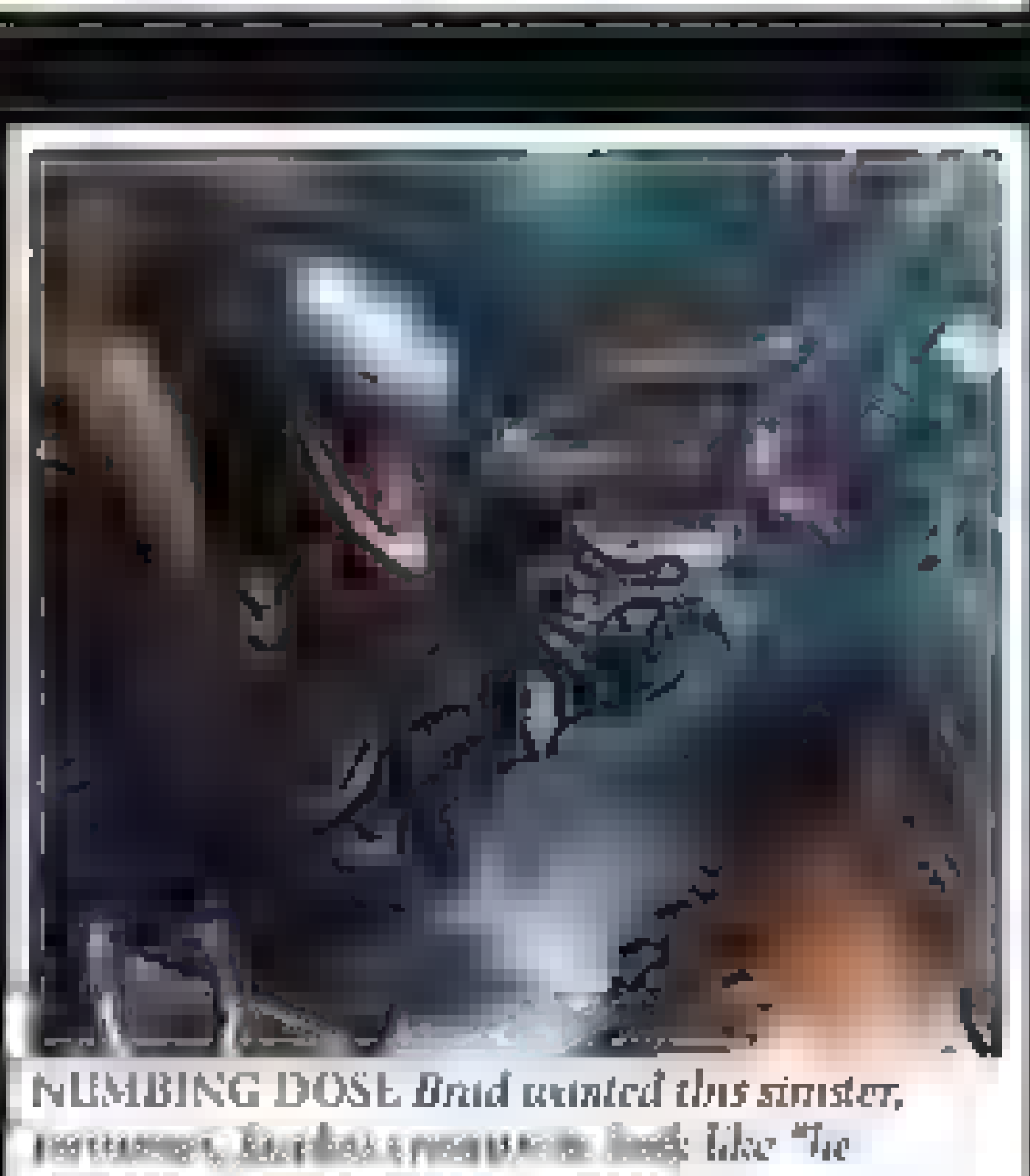
"It's amazing how much attention Brad pays to all those tiny details of his characters. The hours he must spend painting really makes them believable and brings them to life. It's pretty [illegible] creating them."



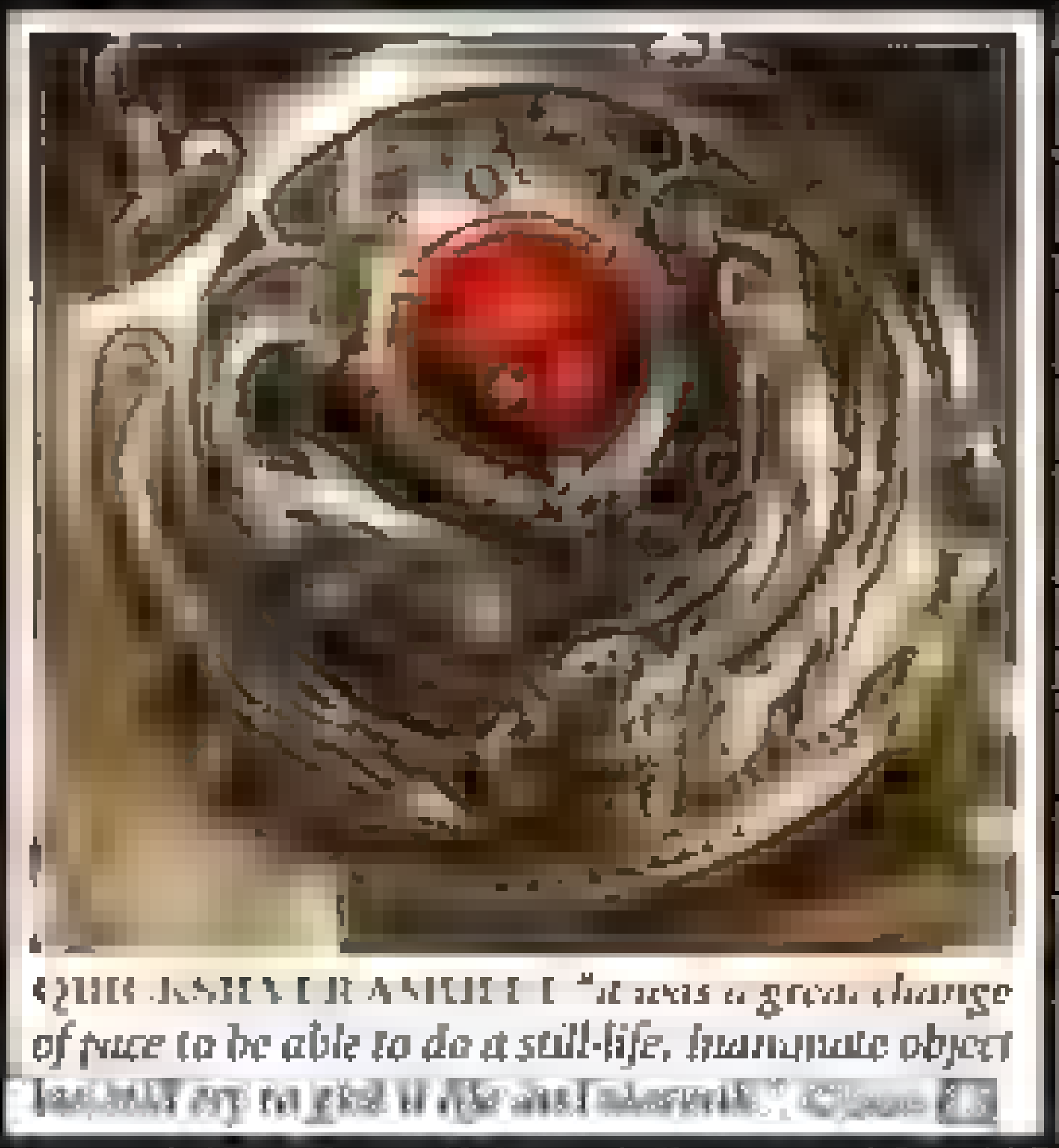
NIN THE PAIN ARTIST *The commission asked for "a female Vedalken torturer and interrogator who really, really got into her work."* Close



SOUL CONDUIT *"I'm a sucker for Frankenstein characters," says Brad. "I went nuts, creating all kinds of juicy, black, dripping horror."* Close



NUMBING DOSE *Brad wanted this sinister, [illegible] to look like "he savoured every minute of his work."* Close



QUICKSILVER AMULET *"It was a great change of pace to be able to do a still-life, inanimate object [illegible]"* Close

All images on these pages © Wizards of the Coast

» I started checking against photos to improve things, I started getting work," he recalls. "My very first job was for a Legend of the Five Rings sourcebook called Shadowlands 2, and from there I moved into doing interior greyscale work for White Wolf, for games like Aberrant and Hunter: The Reckoning."

REFERENCE RELUCTANT

Working exclusively in Photoshop, he still composes everything from imagination at first, only hunting down reference photos of specific areas to check for accuracy and tweak compositionally. "I've tried to compose by looking at something as I go, but it feels really slimy to me, like I'm making a forgery," he says. "There've been a few commercial works where I haven't had a choice but to do a 3D paintover for certain elements because of a crushing deadline, and it felt horrible. It doesn't feel like art to me: digital media, but not art."

Brad counts a recent series of Magic: The Gathering cards among his best work so far. "I got in on the action as they were gearing up to launch an expansion where the bad guys win," he grins. "The concept sketches were all I needed: a monolithic artificial world powered by mana, composed of metal that slowly evolves into flesh and back again, only to be further altered by twisted personalities harnessing dark magic. Juicy stuff!"

Each painting, regardless of size, receives at least 100 hours of attention. "If I lose sleep, I lose sleep" is his attitude. "The art is my top priority." While he prefers artwork to evolve organically, a recent video tutorial for ConceptArt.org forced Brad to scrutinise his creative process for the first time. The result – A Hostile Takeover – has since become one of his favourite portfolio pieces.

"The idea had been rattling around my head for a while; the idea of a dark-future gang strutting slow-mo towards camera," he says. "The kind of characters that I'd love to play in my own MMO: a semi-post-apocalyptic urban warfare game where gangs fight for control over what's left of humanity. You could play a mutant, altered human or cyborg; stuff like that."

FINISHING TOUCHES

Although he was satisfied with the image at first, Brad later revisited the piece to refine the shape of the female gang leader's head. "I wanted a more pre-historic, simian feel; a powerful, primitive, ape-like set," he explains. "I wanted her to look like she'd shoot first, then ask questions. The re-tune went pretty fluidly, and all the hallmarks came out – the pronounced brow, jaw and deep-set eyes."

While he admits he's torn as to whether tutorials such as this do more harm than good – "Part of me thinks that spelling it out for everyone robs the artist of that struggle to figure it out for yourself," he muses – Brad believes that it ultimately boils down to an artist's will to succeed. "Can you overcome character defects like impatience, anxiety, or lack of motivation, and improve?" is his challenge to any aspiring artists out there. "Are you really willing to walk away from the things you love, and devote yourself to art?"

Gallery

Development sheet

PROJECT TITLE: THE ODYSSEY

Completed as part of an independent study project for school with the talented Bryan Wynia, **Zach Berger** designed a twisted and unique version of the classic Cyclops creature from The Odyssey

PROFILE

Zach Berger

Zach's an entertainment design student at Art Center College of Design and a freelance concept artist working on film and video games. His clients include West Studio, Amalgamated Dynamics Inc., and Rhythm and Hues. At the moment Zach's taking time off school to work as an art intern at Sony Santa Monica.

artofzachary.com

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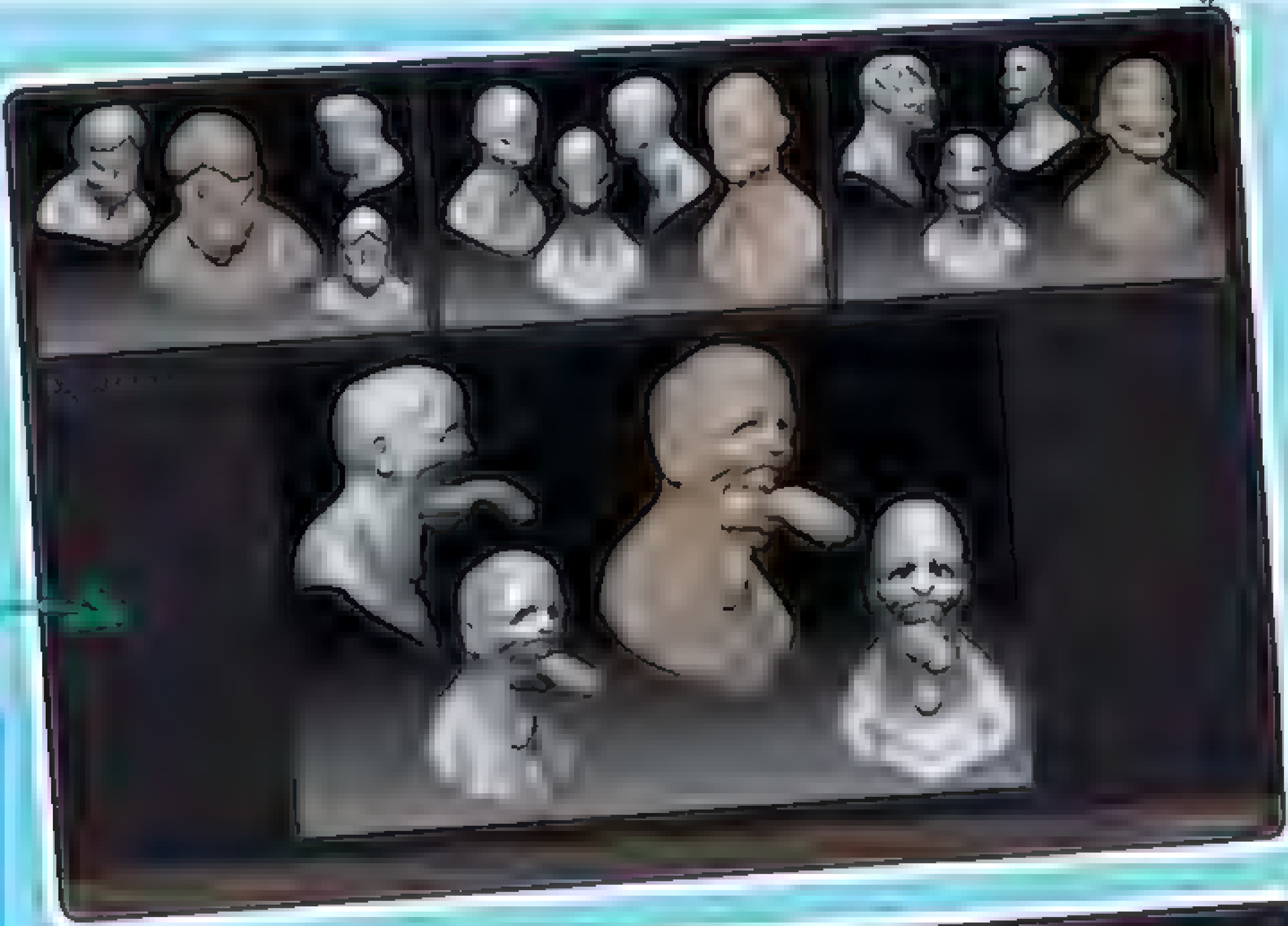

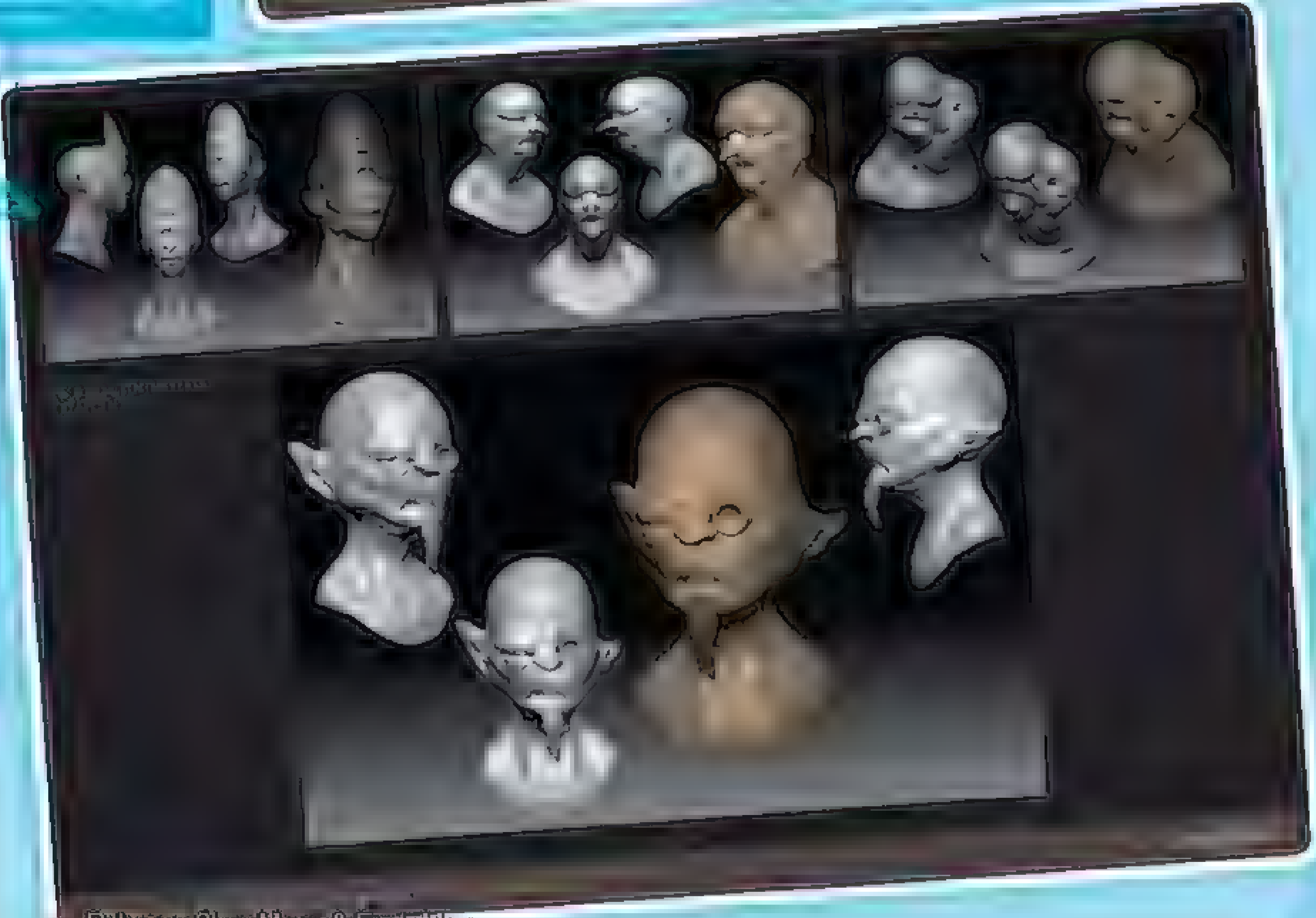

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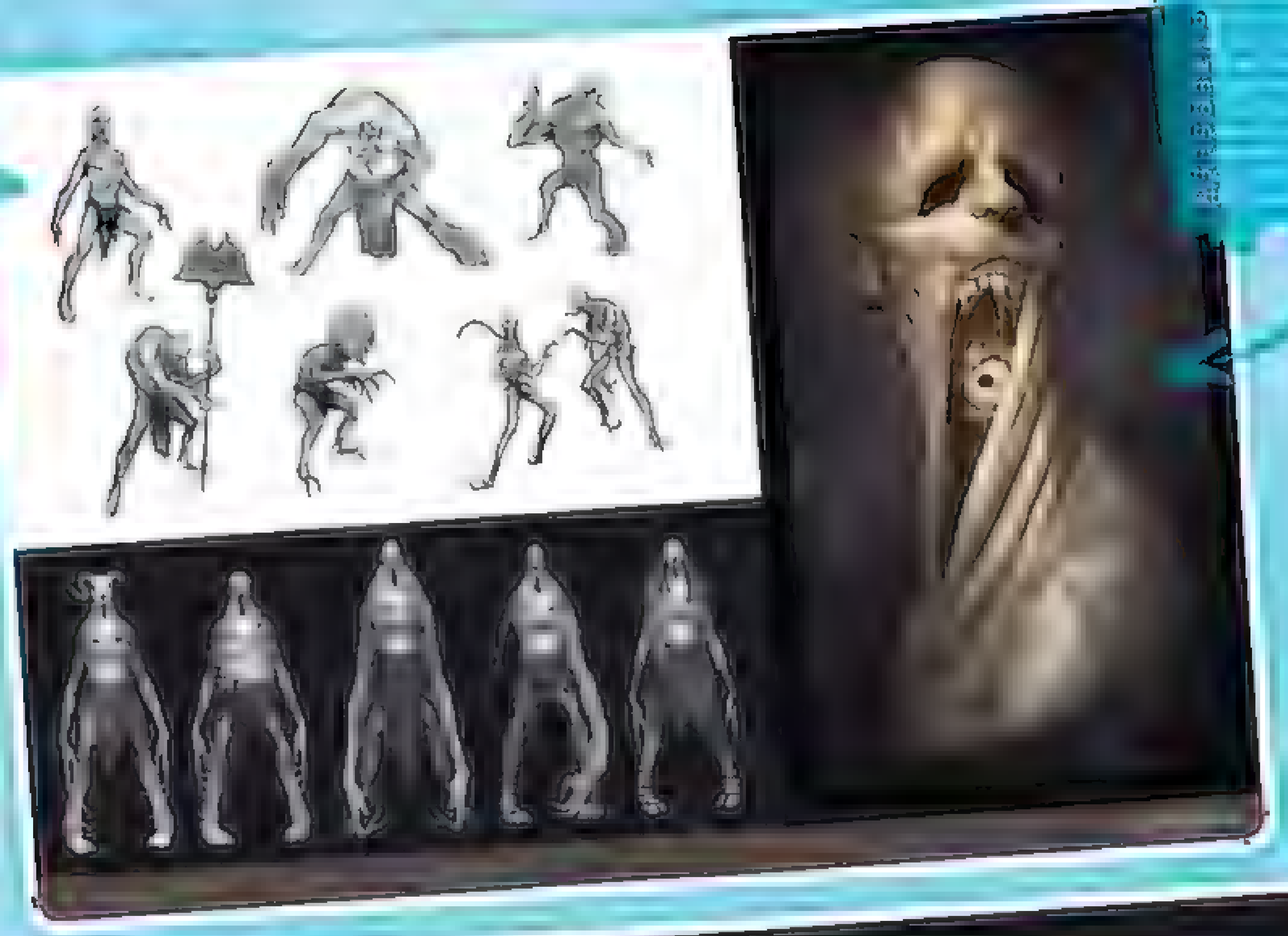
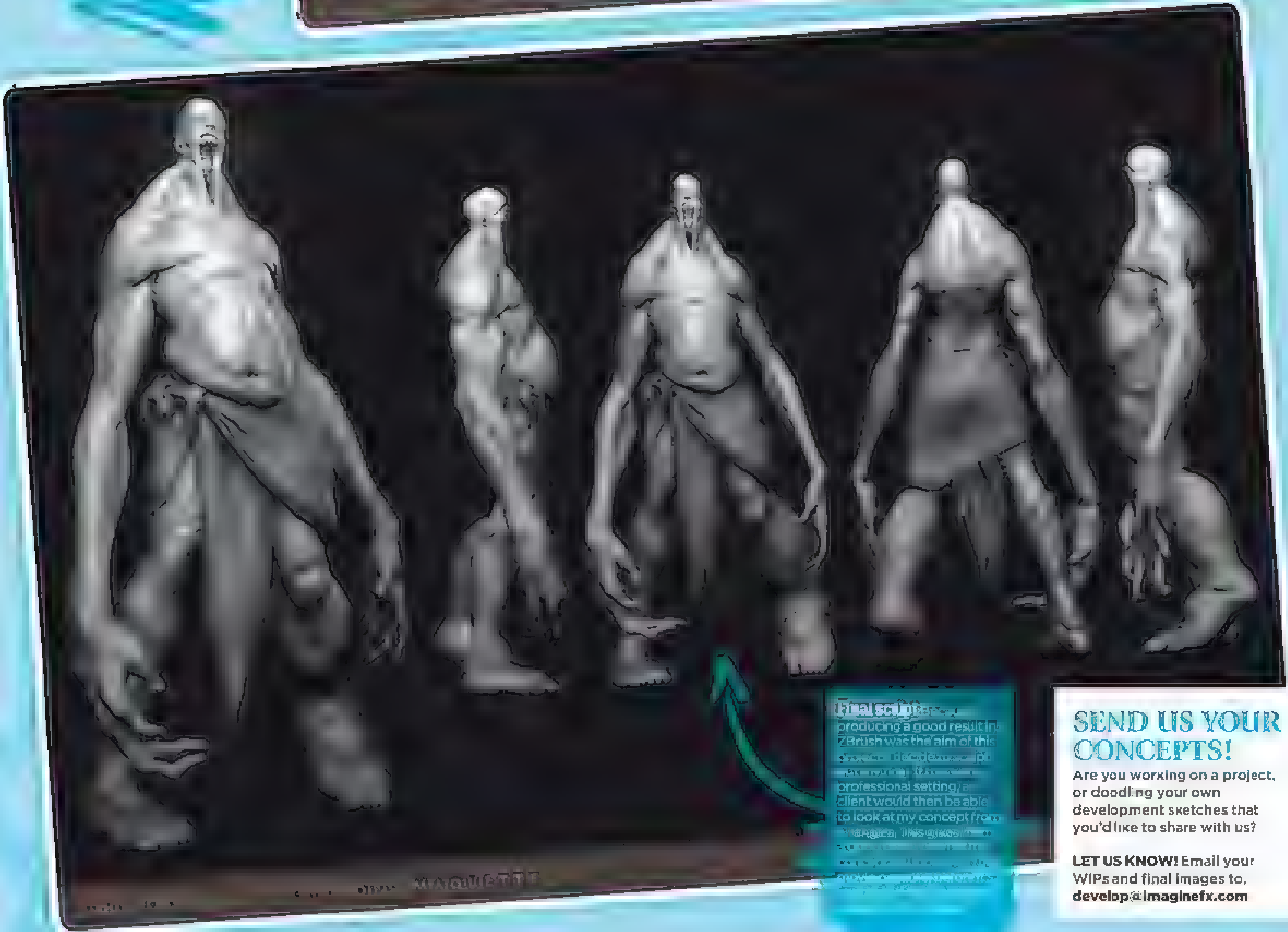




Final sculpt [illegible] producing a good result in ZBrush was the aim of this [illegible] professional setting, a client would then be able to look at my concept from [illegible] angles. This [illegible]

SEND US YOUR CONCEPTS!

Are you working on a project, or doodling your own development sketches that you'd like to share with us?

LET US KNOW! Email your WIPs and final images to, **develop@imaginefx.com**

FXPosé Traditional

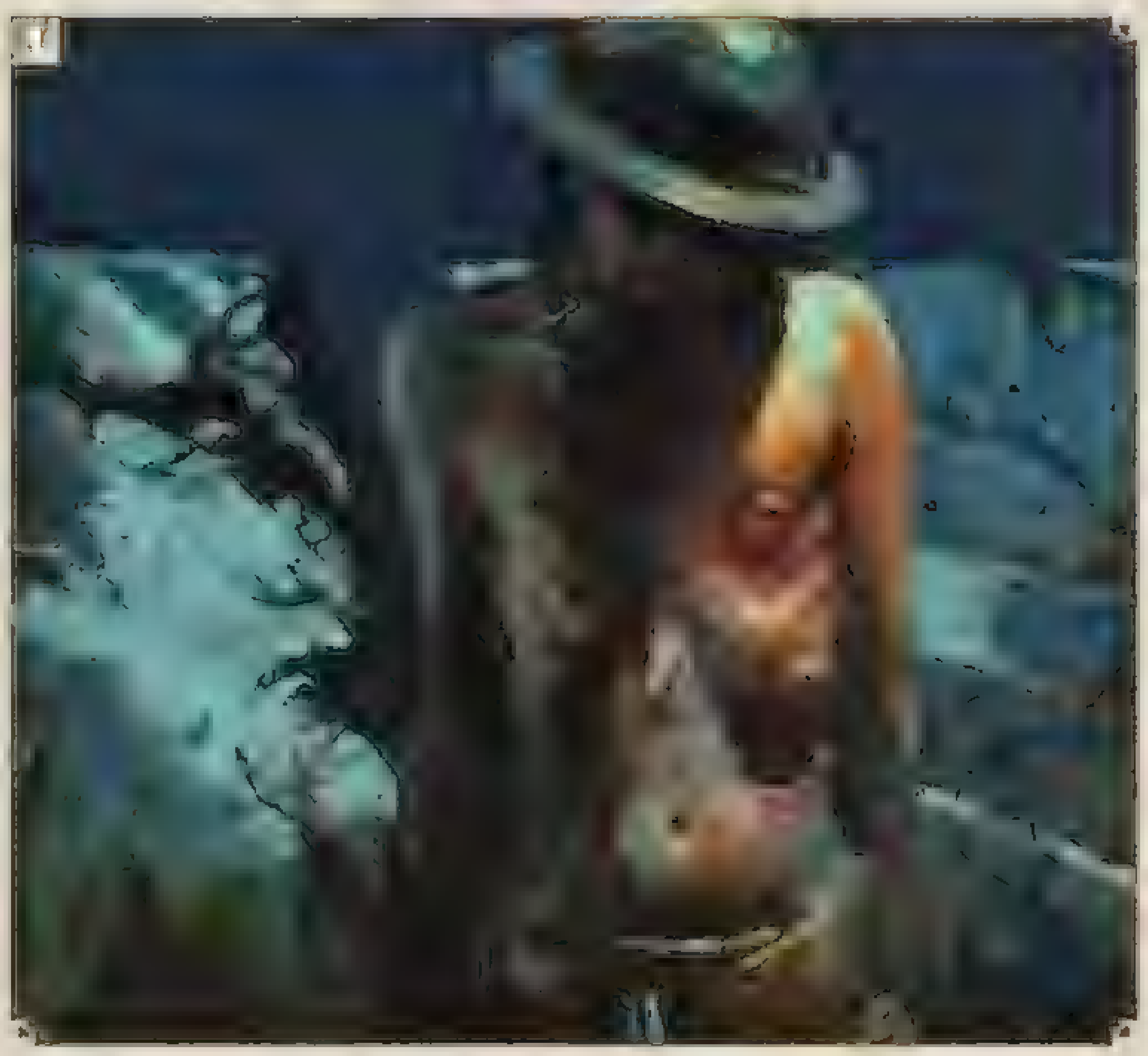
George Pratt

US
georgepratt.com
blind_boy@mac.com
Oils, acrylics, watercolours, pen and ink, mixed media

"Although I'm a computer junkie, I still love getting dirty with paint, struggling with media and not knowing what's going to happen," says George, who also manages to find time to be a writer, photographer, film-maker and teacher. "Traditional processes still have me in their grip, and will always. Nothing beats printmaking and painting – the work giving back to you, taking you down roads unplanned."

George teaches full time at the Ringling College of Art and Design, and is also a faculty member of The Illustration Academy and The Art Department with other luminaries such as Jon Foster and Ron Lemen.

1



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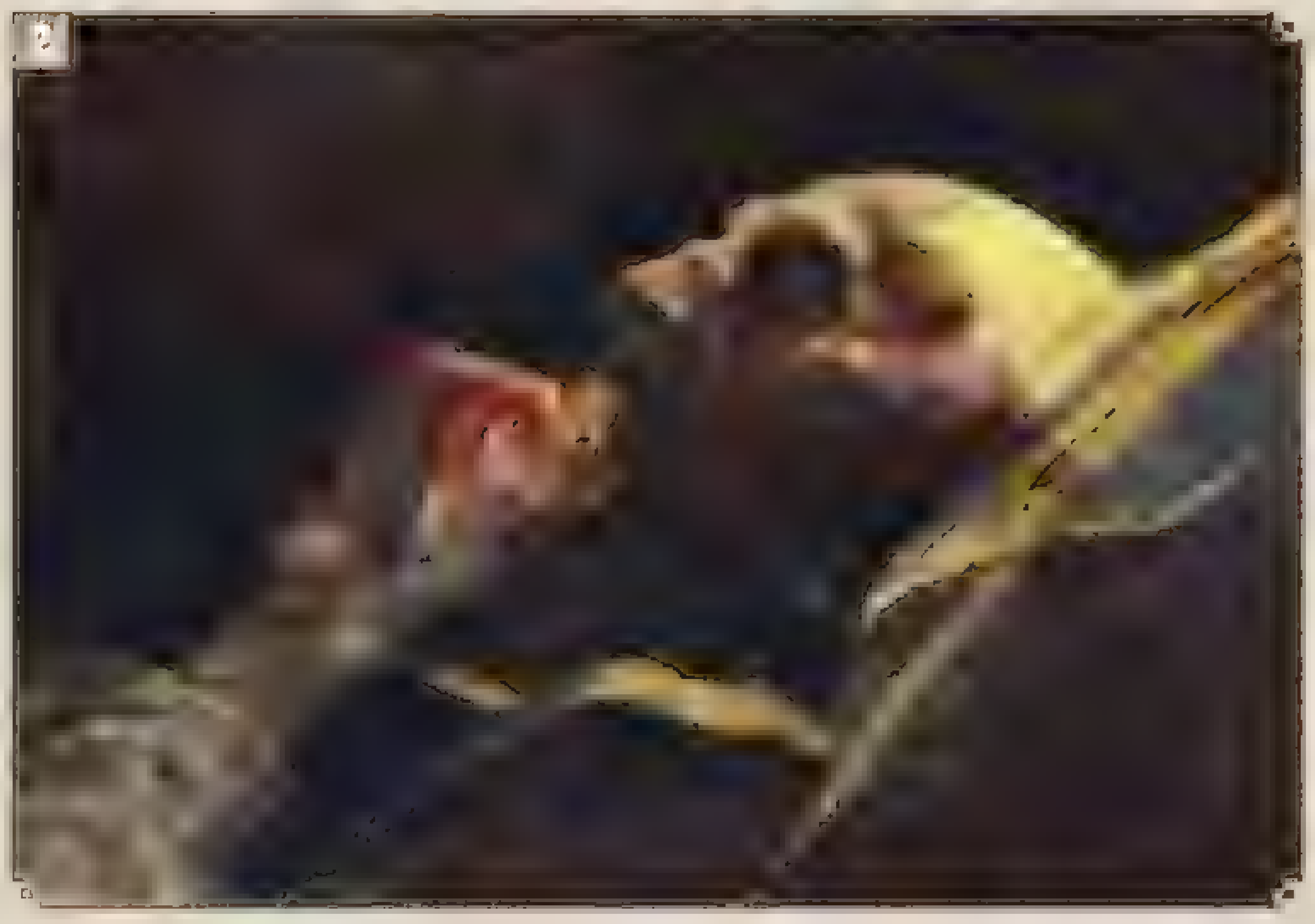
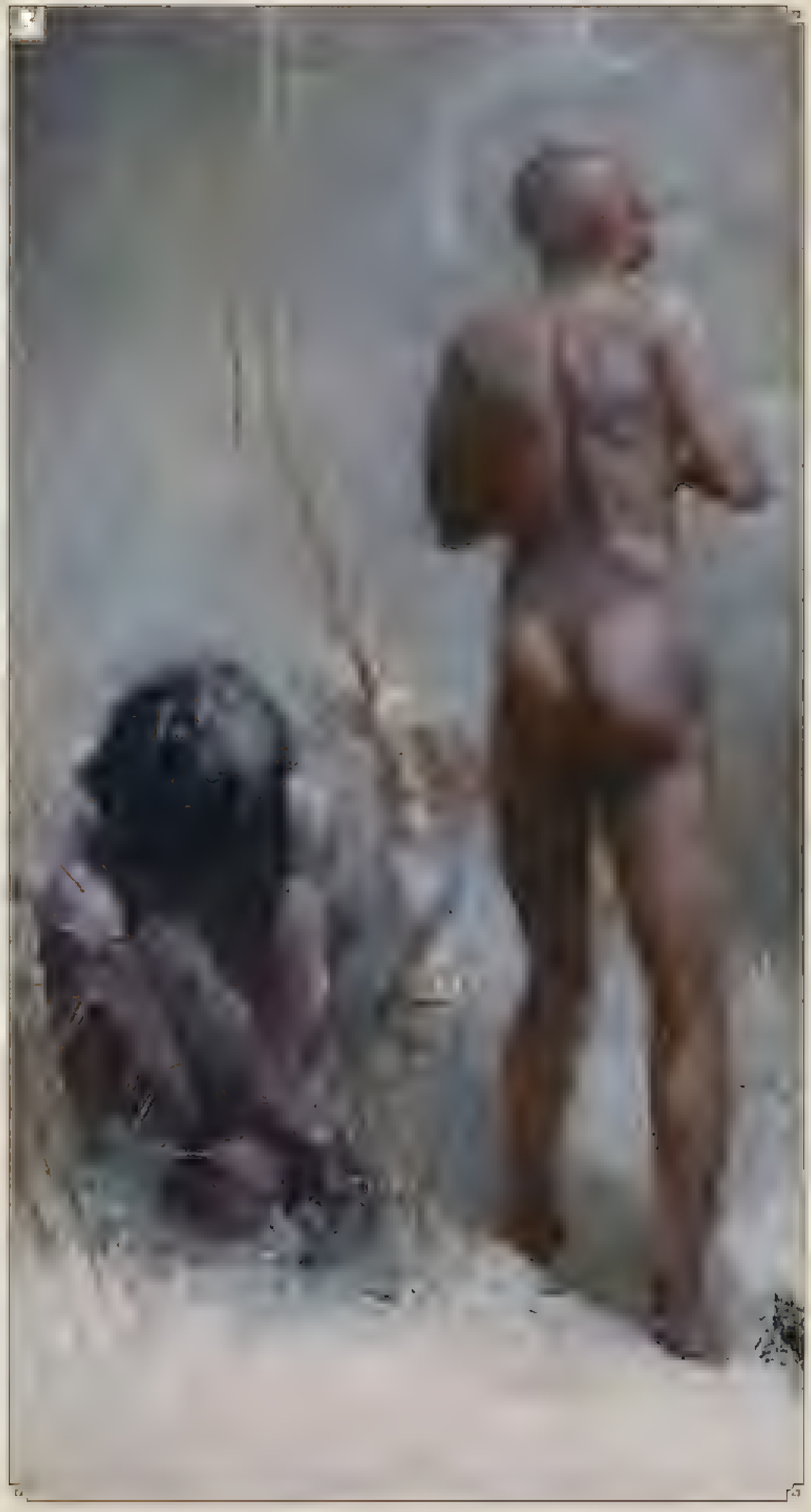




BEATEN TO THE WIDE
24x24in, mixed media on panel
"This was a two-hour demo for my painting class. 'Beaten to the wide' is an expression from World War I meaning worn out, fatigued. This piece was done in acrylics, oils and tar. I'll start with a fast underpainting of bright, saturated acrylics, knowing that when I hit them with the tar they'll settle down. Wherever I pull out with turps the colours pop out with their intensity again."

MEMORY OF WAR
20x16in, mixed media on Gator board
"Here's a piece from my solo show in Paris and Brussels. Hans von Hammer is the main character from Enemy Ace, a DC Comics character by Joe Kubert. The coordinators of the show asked if I'd do a couple of new pieces of the character. This is Hans as an old man, as I portrayed him in my graphic novel, Enemy Ace: War Idyll, reflecting on his experiences as a pilot in the Great War."

AWAKENING
47x65in, oil on linen
"This is an older piece, but it's never seen print. It's for a series on the Holocaust entitled Find Me a Voice. My paintings and prints are coupled with Gabor Barabas's poems about his grandparents dying in Auschwitz and his parents escaping that place."

IMAGINEFX CRIT

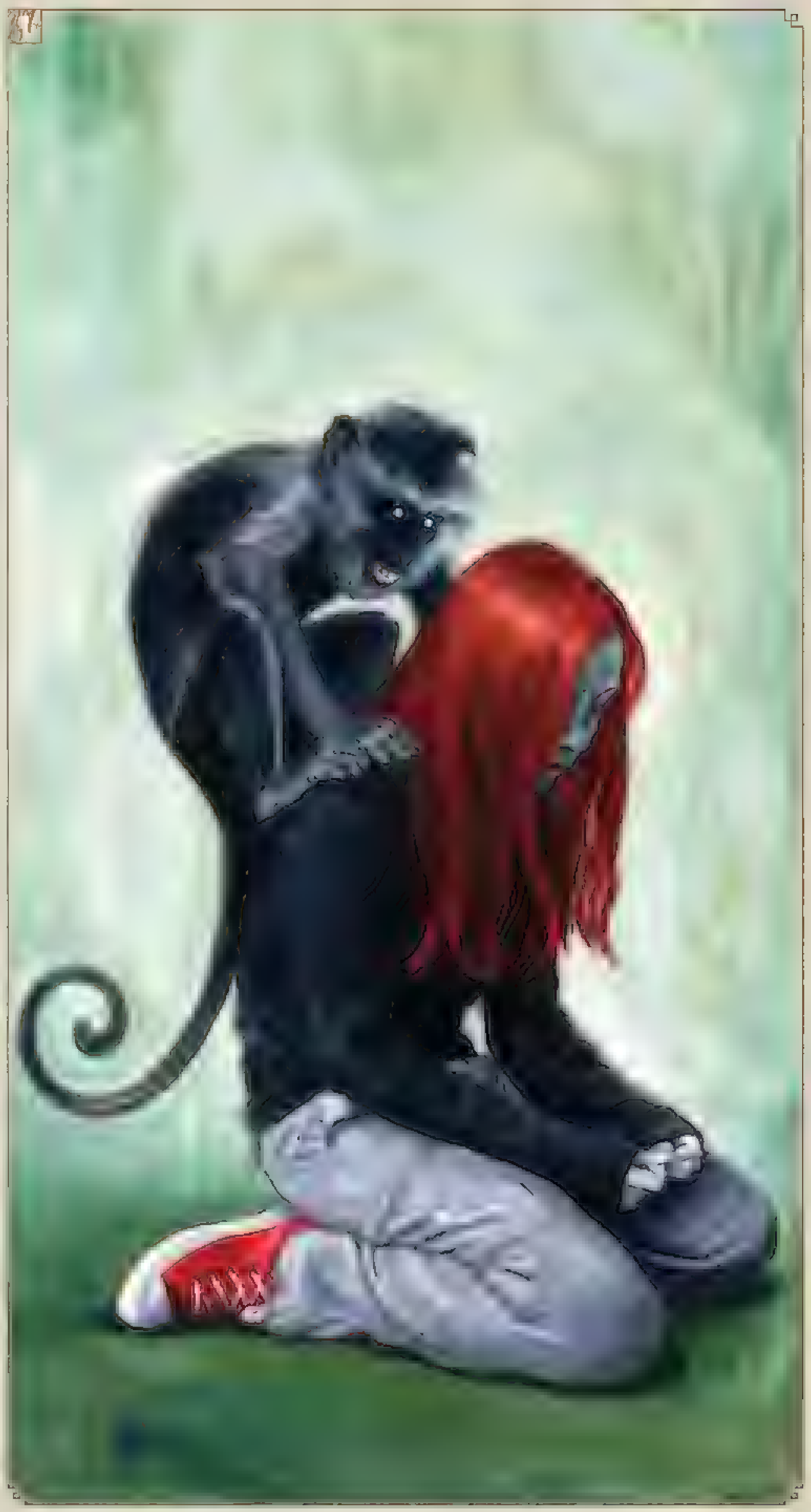
"George's masterly command of the medium helps us engage with horrifying imagery. The portrait of comic antihero Hans von Hammer is simply amazing."
Beren Neale, Staff Writer

Robert Carter

LOCATION Canada
WEB crackedhat.com
rob@crackedhat.com
MEDIA Oil on board

Born in St Albans in England, Robert moved to Ontario at an early age and graduated from Sheridan College School of Art and Design in 2002. He combines a strong foundation in portraiture with a sense of visual and conceptual problem-solving. The results are striking, vibrant and textured illustrations, with subjects ranging from the realistic to the surreal.

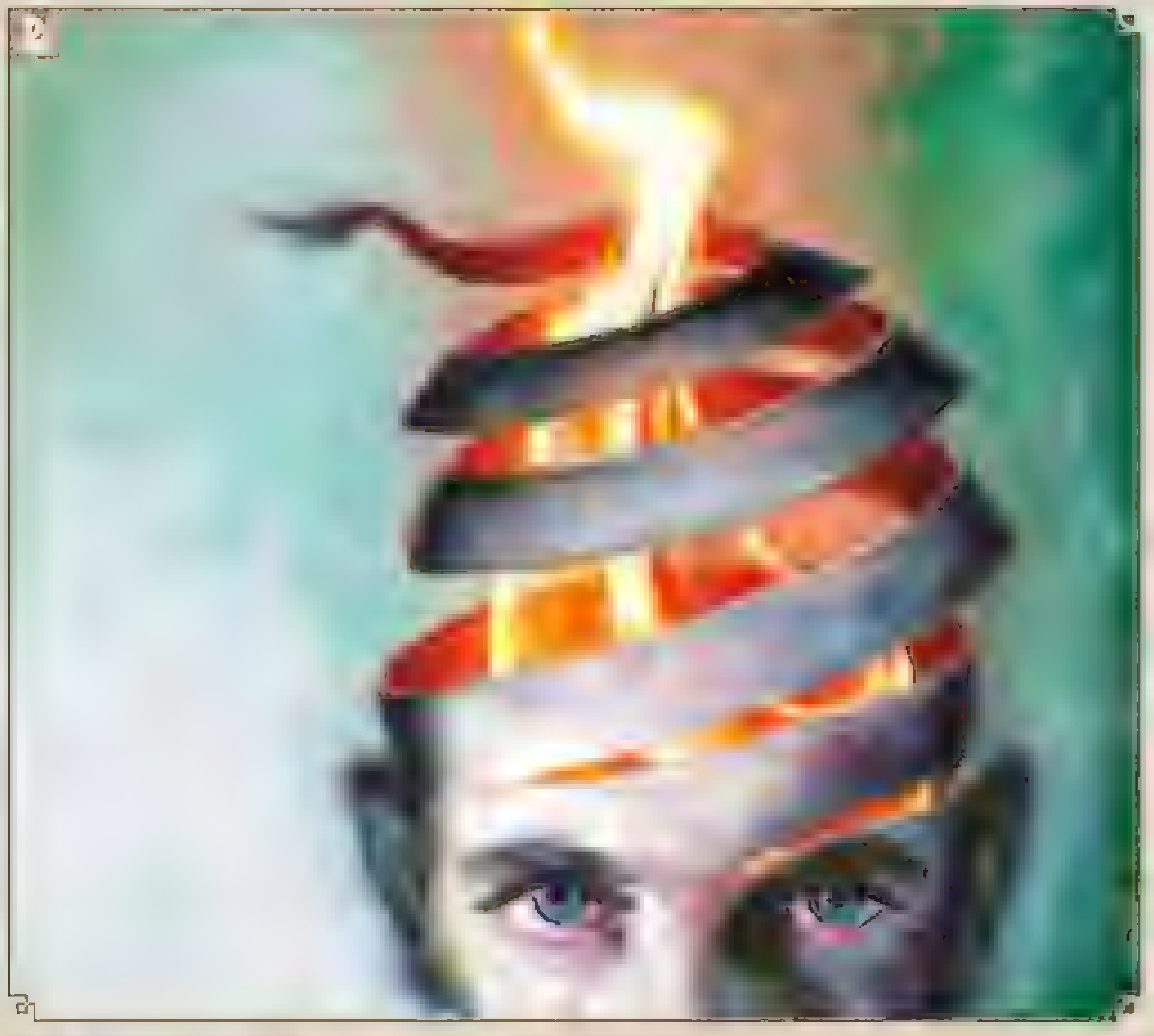
"My work has appeared in books, magazines and advertisements," says Robert, "including the LA Times, Penguin Books and Juxtapose magazine."

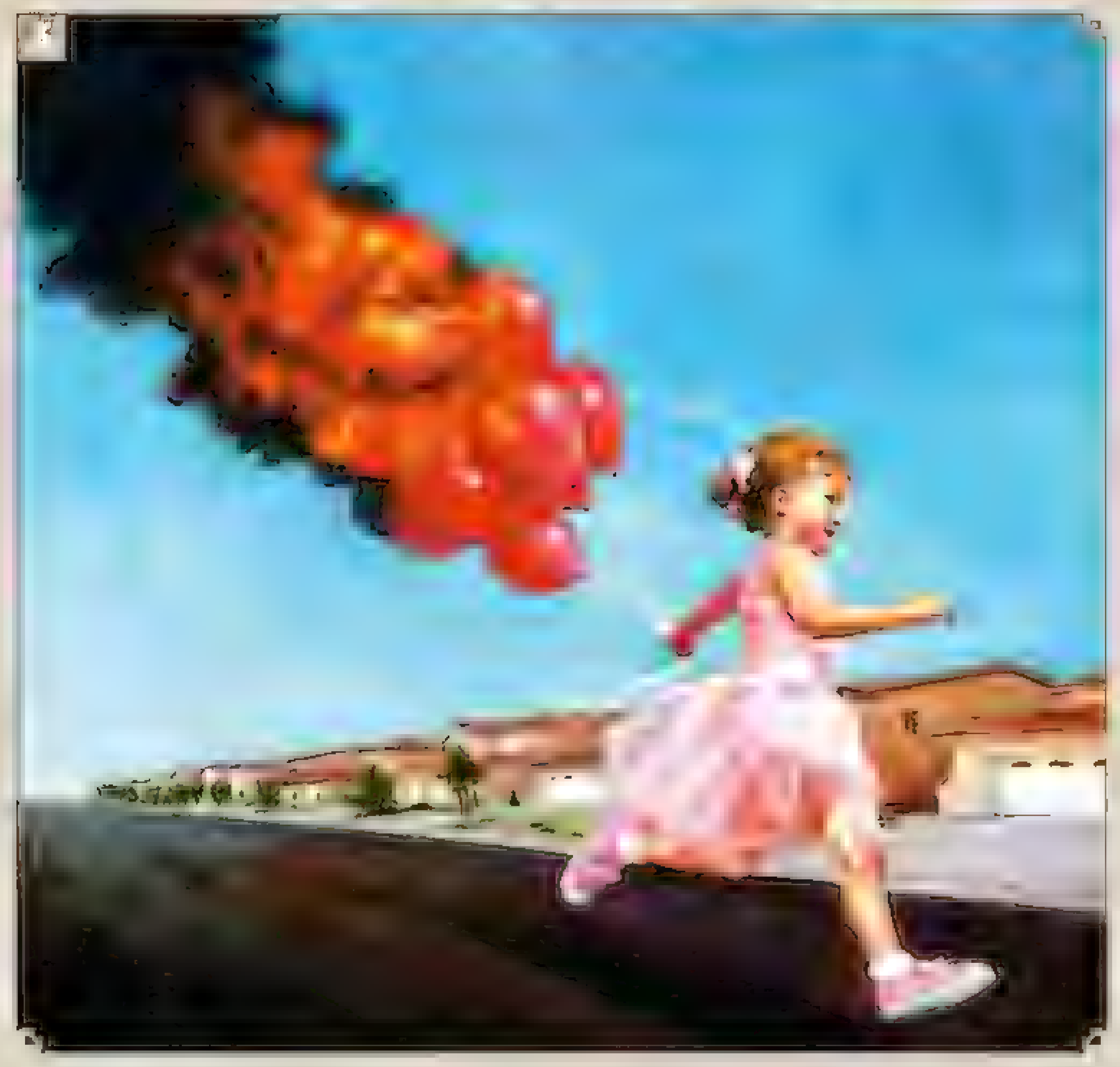


TEEN ADDICTION
10.5x15.25in, oil on masonite
"A cover illustration for Grip magazine on the problems of teen addiction. The old saying 'monkey on your back' is being used here literally to depict the struggles young teens face with various addictions and substance abuse."

UNRAVELLING FIRE
12x12in, oil on board
"This is CD cover art for Puncture Vine's debut album of the same name. It's a piece about the inner workings of the psyche and how the thoughts inside us can sometimes feel as though there's no room left to hold them."

[illegible]
20x20in, oil on masonite
"More CD cover art, this time for Puncture Vine's second album. It's a juxtaposition of innocence and the extreme. The image is also in keeping with the subject of fire, which is a running theme through Puncture Vine's CD titles and cover art visuals."





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"Kids running with balloons in tow is a classic childhood snapshot. So to introduce a palatable threat in the form of fire is unsettling – it goes against the grain and makes you think. That's a sign of a good artist."
Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

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See page 114 for full DVD contents

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

26 PAGES OF TUITION

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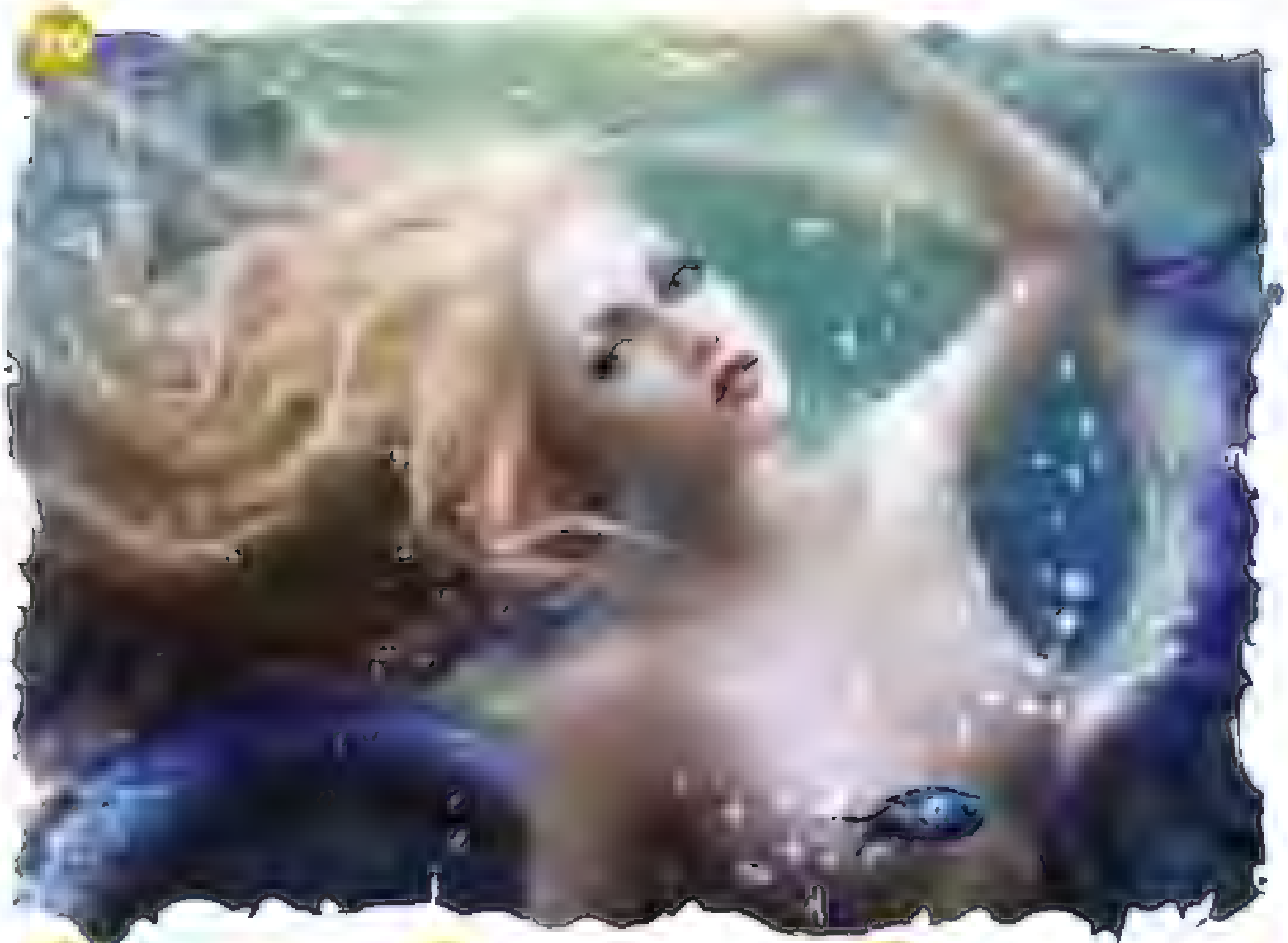
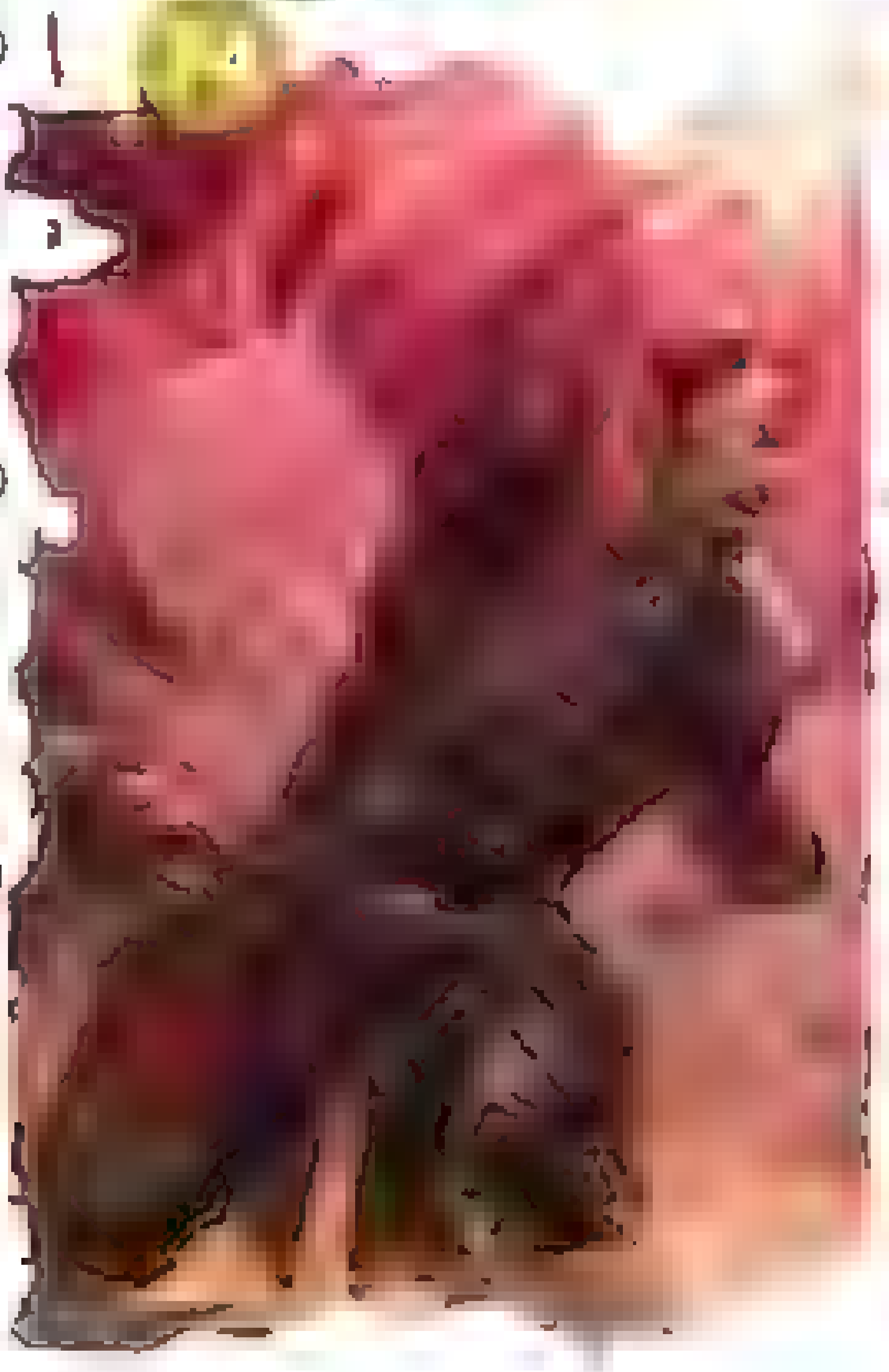
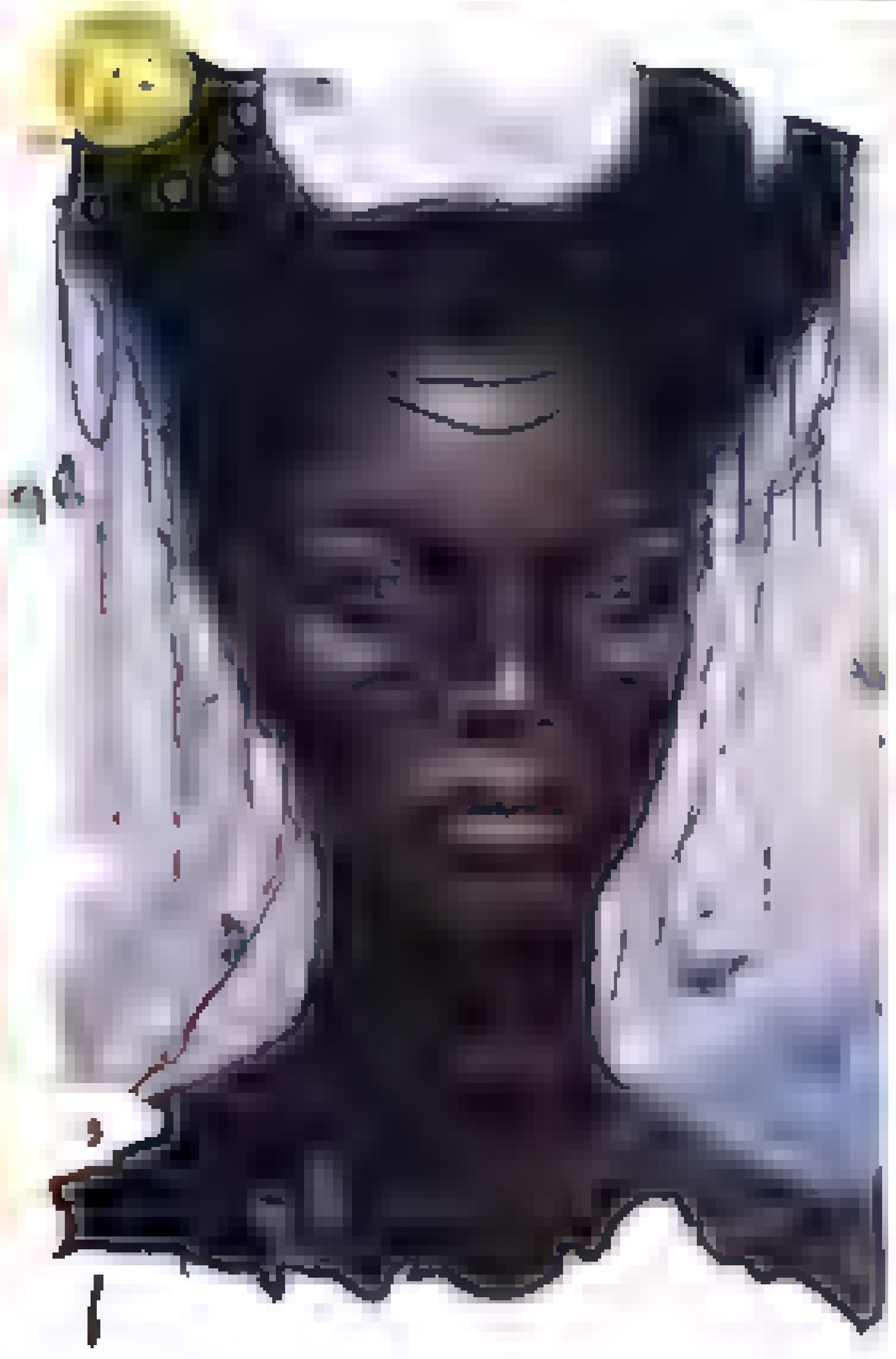
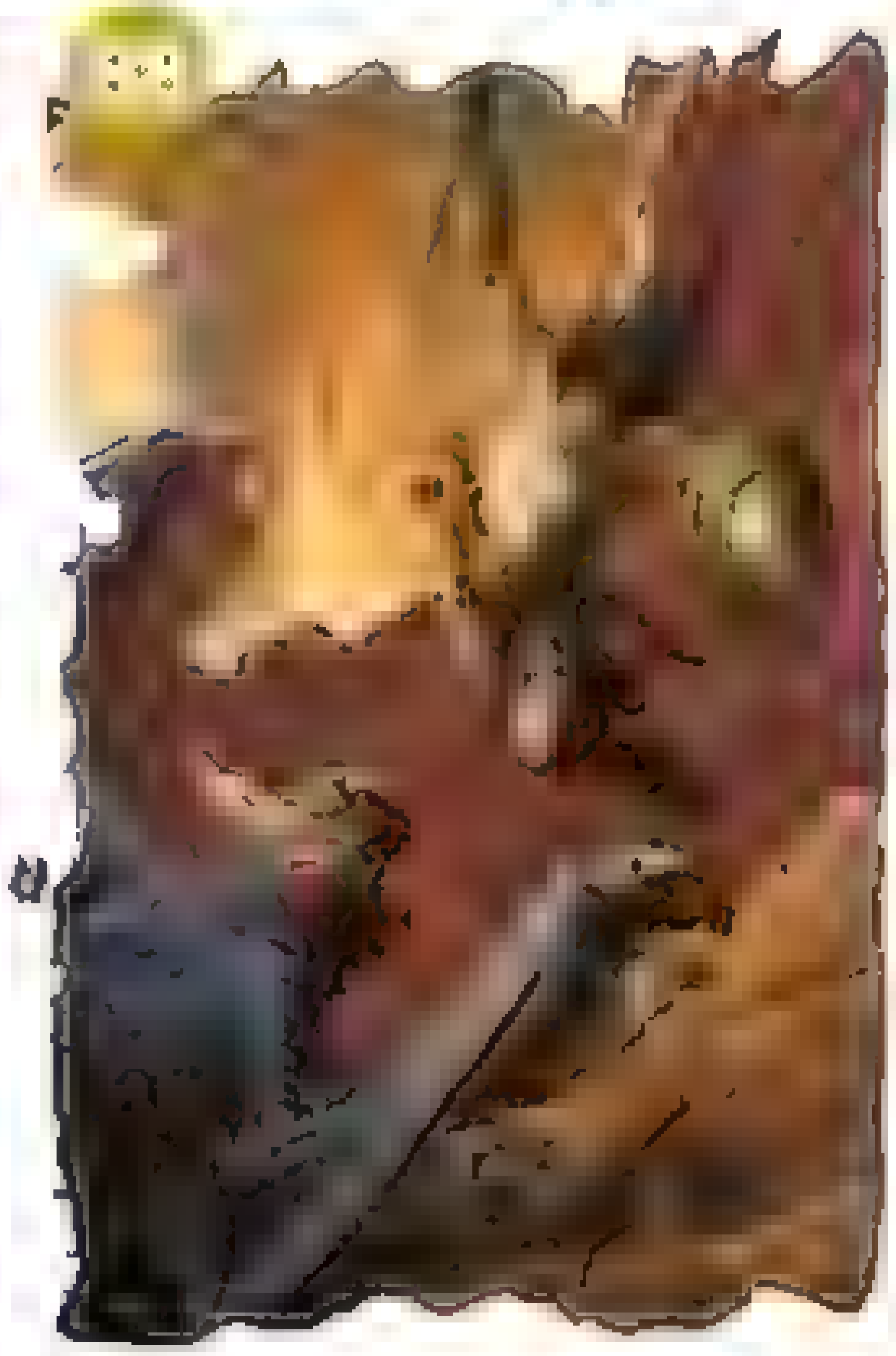








This issue:

Colour a radiant beauty of the sea
Cover artist Mélanie Delon shows you how to paint underwater light.

Light up an underground clash
Svetlin Velinov reveals how he paints an image for use on a website.

Enhance the face of a character
Learn how to add interest and realism to a portrait with Lauren K Cannon

Paint a lush fantasy forest
Jorge Jacinto reveals how to create an epic-scale arboreal scene that pulls you in.

Navigate the new User Interface
Simon Dominic on how to optimise your workflow and workspace with Painter 12's brand-new user interface

Learn how to age your fantasy art
Daren Bader explains how to "beat up" an illustration so that it looks traditional

Painter's mirror mode explored
Dave Kendall uses Painter 12's new Mirror and Kaleidoscope tools to create an oppressive landscape.

Photoshop

COLOUR A RADIANT BEAUTY OF THE SEA

Learn how to paint underwater light and make a splash with your digital art with the help of **Mélanie Delon** and her luminescent mermaid

Painting fantastic creatures is always an exciting prospect. You can really unleash your imagination and go wild with the design and composition. For this mermaid the ImagineFX art editor wanted something special, so I made several rough sketches in black and white until he found the one that was right for the cover.

I'll start my workshop with the selected sketch, and try to show you my workflow for this illustration as well as explain how I paint an underwater scene. As always, before starting I carry out a lot of research. References are important if you want to get a subject right. So I try to find painted examples of mermaids, underwater photos, fish, coral and so on. I also take some pictures of myself for the body reference, under similar lighting conditions. This is useful because the mermaid's pose isn't straightforward.

After all for the preparation, I can start the painting. As you'll see, I work the piece as a whole. This helps to give the final image a sense of unity, despite all the different undersea elements that are present. I'll also use a lot of custom brushes, for texture or simply painting elements. I'll show you some, but I'd also encourage you to come up with some of your own, too. It's useful to have a custom brush library because it'll bring a personal touch to your artworks.

So now let's go into the deep blue sea and meet the beauty of the abyss.

Artist PROFILE

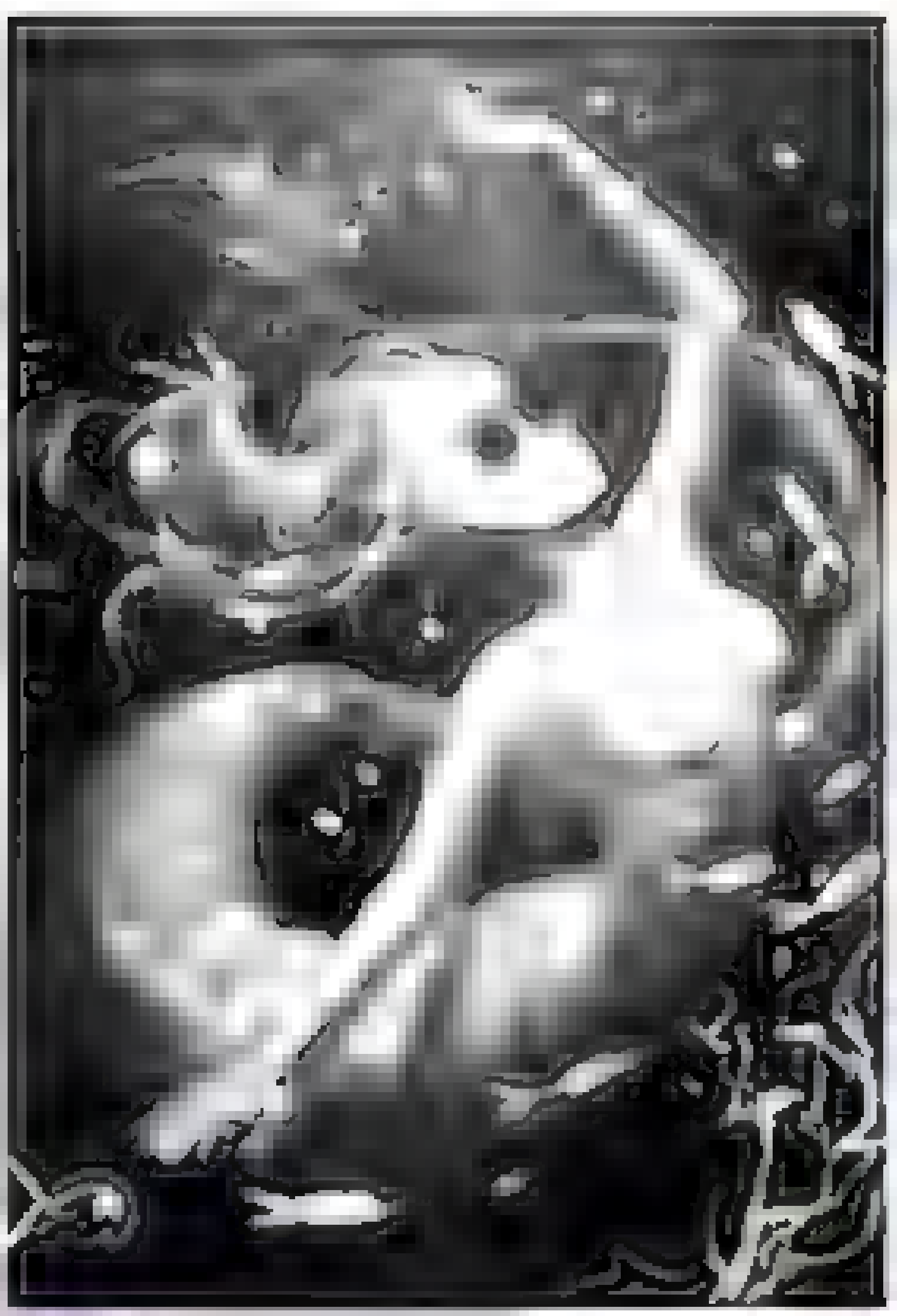
Mélanie Delon

COUNTRY: France

[illegible] illustrator [illegible] works as a [illegible] on her personal artbook [illegible] by [illegible]

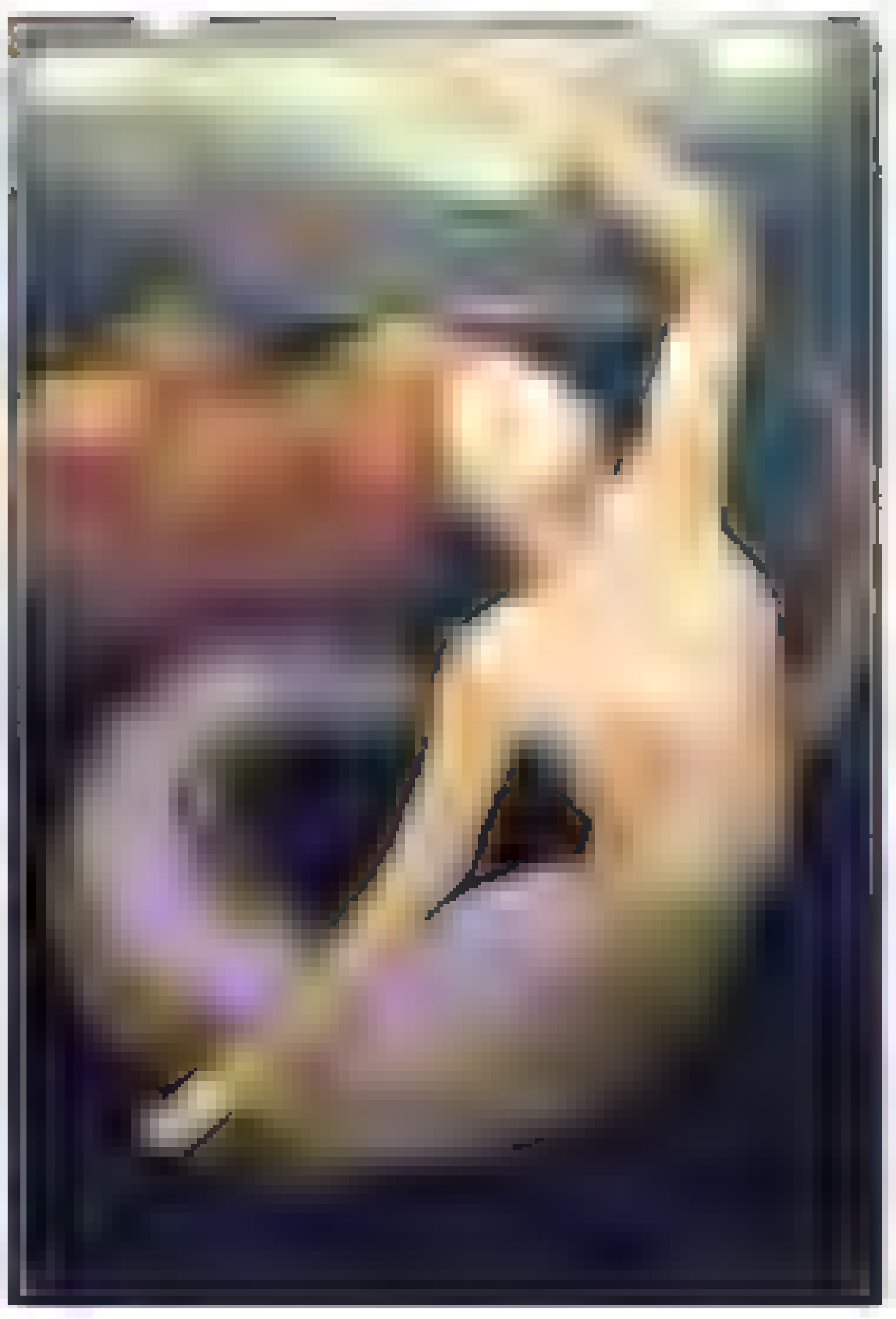
DVD Assets

The files you need [illegible] your DVD in the Mélanie Delon folder to be found in the Workshops section.



1 Composing the initial sketch

This is a very rough sketch, just to get a quick idea of the composition. As you'll see I don't stick to it, but it helps a lot at the beginning of the process to have a nice and precise direction. Working in black and white and without line art helps me to plan where the light falls, seeing where it either works or lacks impact and dynamism. I paint with a Basic Round Edge brush with a large diameter. This ensures I can't go into details.



2 Establishing the undersea colours

Next it's time to experiment with the creation of my initial colour scheme. I quickly lay down colours over the previous image on a different layer. It's my first attempt at deciding on the colour scheme, and it'll no doubt change along the way. Again, I don't work the details or refine the shape – I just need to see if the sketch will work with colours instead of black and white. To do this I use the same brush as I did in step one.

ON THE DVD

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

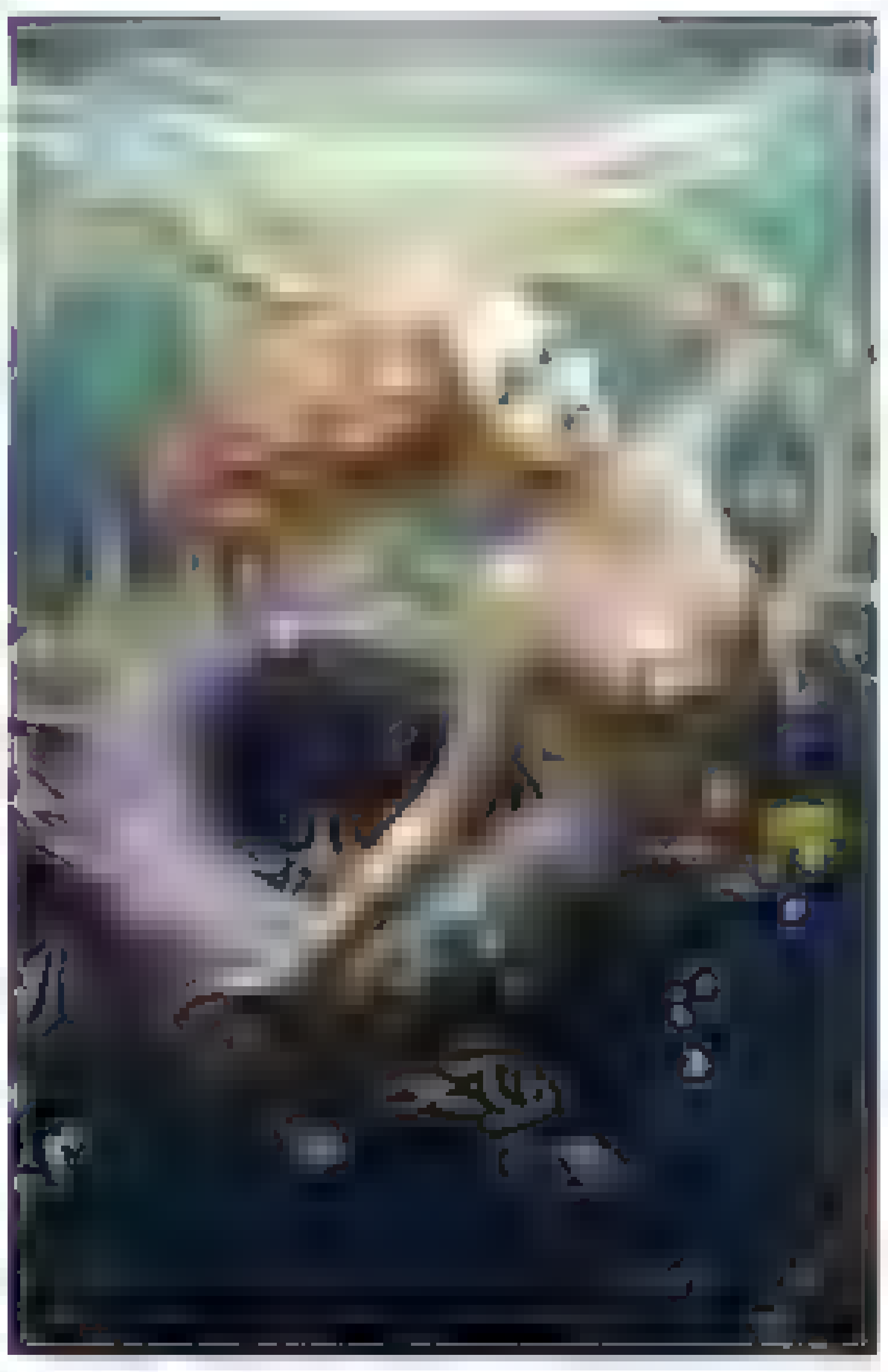
PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH 1

[illegible]

CUSTOM BRUSH 2

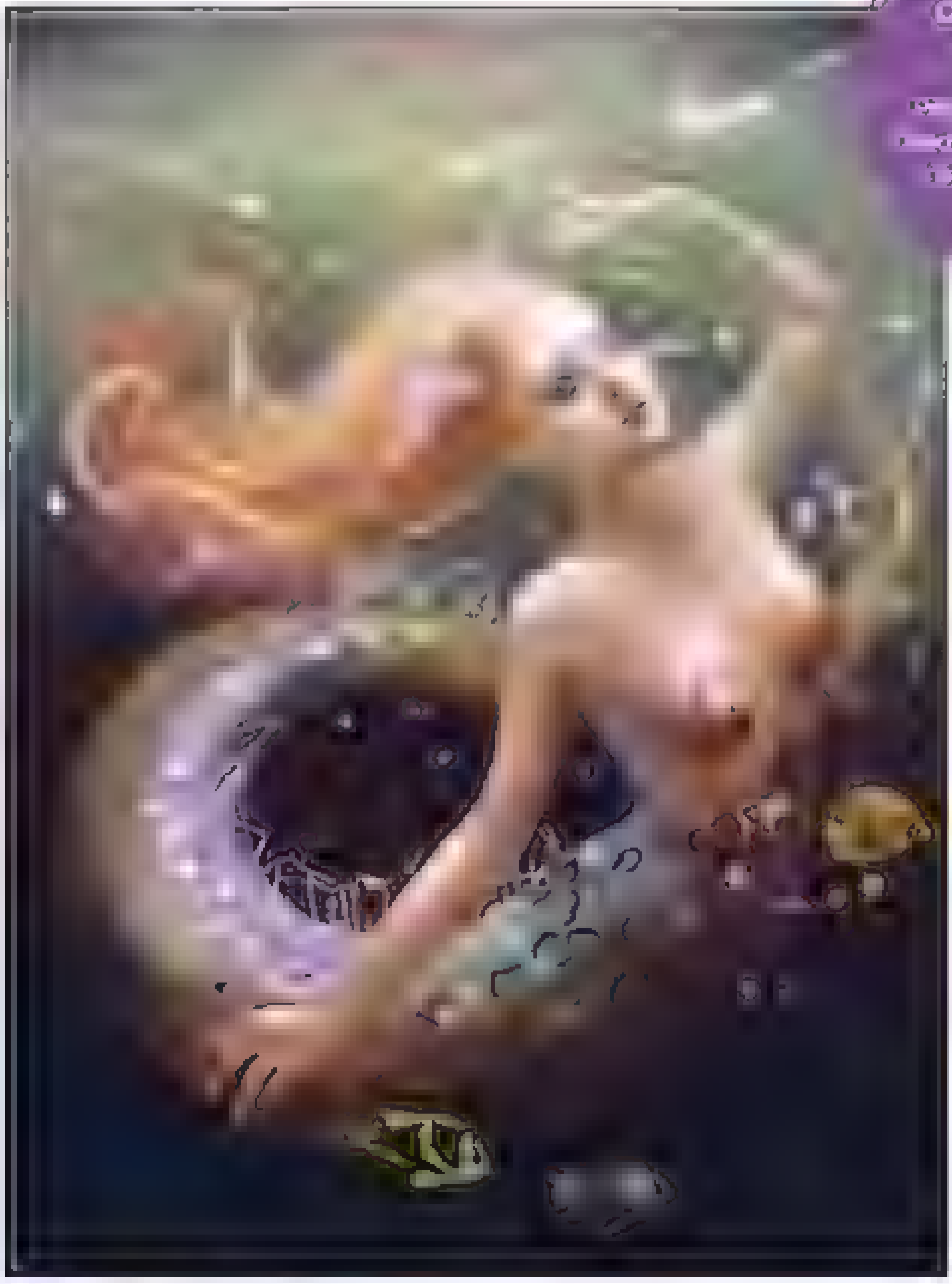
I use this brush for the dorsal fin and in general [illegible]



3 Finding the composition

I add a few new elements to the composition, such as the wave line on the top and some fish on the bottom. Both will bring pleasing touches of colour to the painting. The light source above the water's surface will mostly affect the upper part of the mermaid: her face, hair and right arm. The face will be the focal point of the illustration, so I need to get this part right. »

StoreKage.com

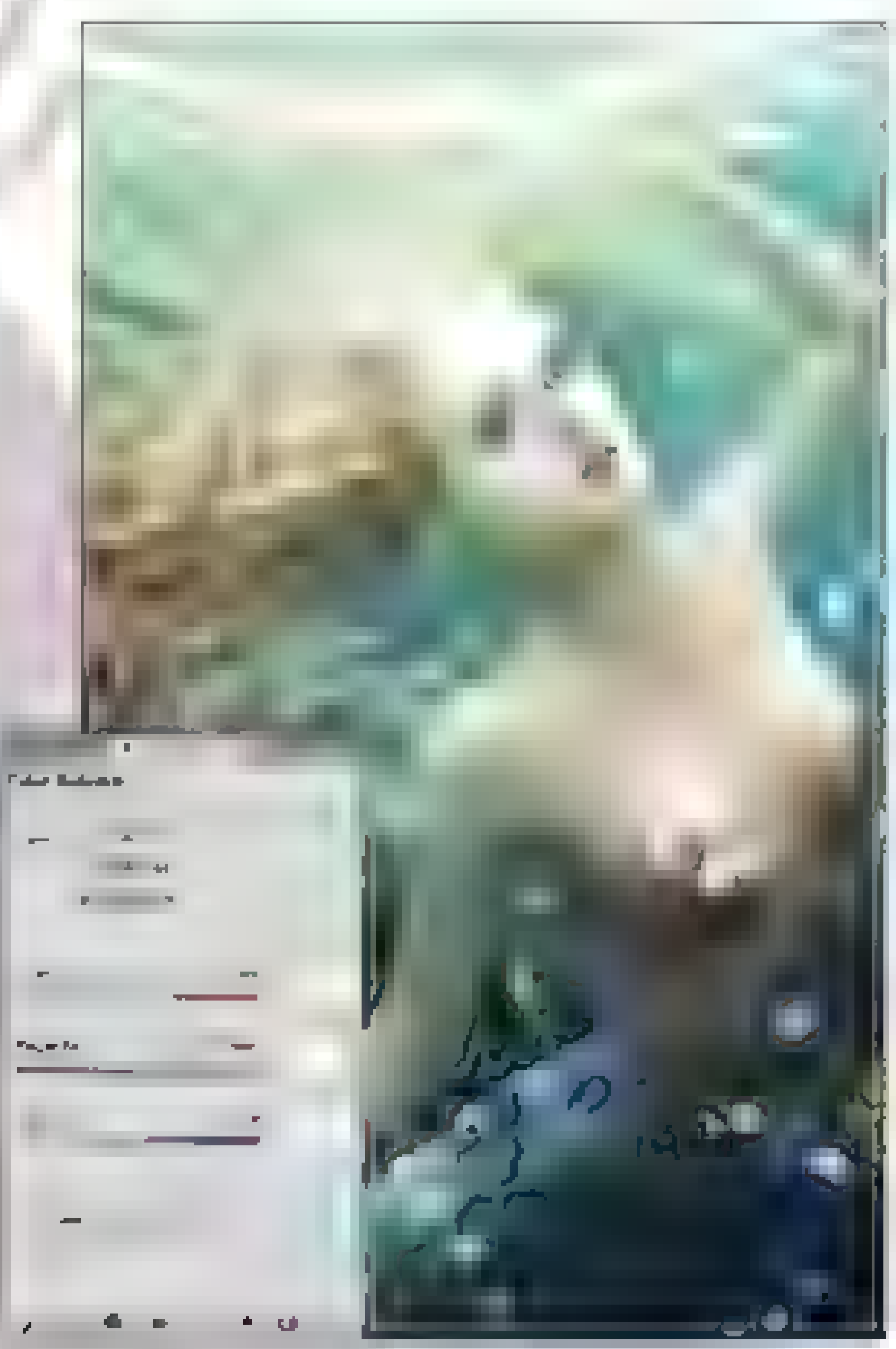


4 The first details

I work on the design of the mermaid, sketching scales and a huge dorsal fin on her tail. This particular element will add movement to the character, as I want it to flow all around in a wild way. There'll be also a lot of bubbles, which will add touches of light all over the image such as sparkles. I start to add more details to the fish, too.

5 Correcting colours

The previous colours didn't have enough blue in them, so I quickly use Photoshop's Color Balance tool to correct them instead of repainting everything. It's a great tool and I often call on it to add more colour variation or, as in this case, to correct the colours. I also add more space around the character – she needs to breathe – and draw the first coral details on the left-hand corner of the image.



PRO SECRETS

Bubbles and scales

When I have to paint a [illegible] another painting. Alternatively, if I don't want to create new brushes I simply duplicate the layer, [illegible]

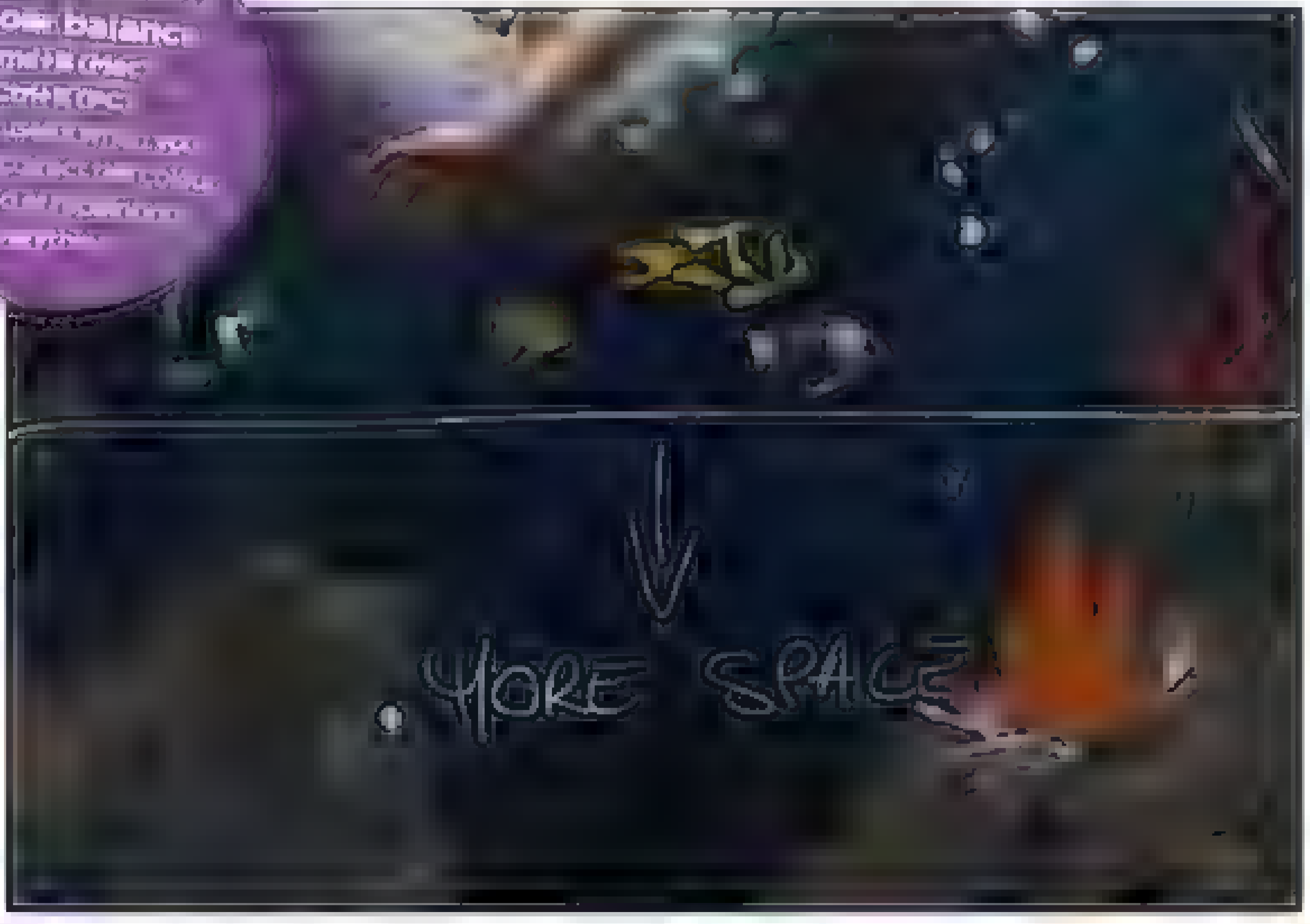
Shortcuts

Colour balance

Cmd+B (Mac)

Ctrl+B (PC)

[illegible]

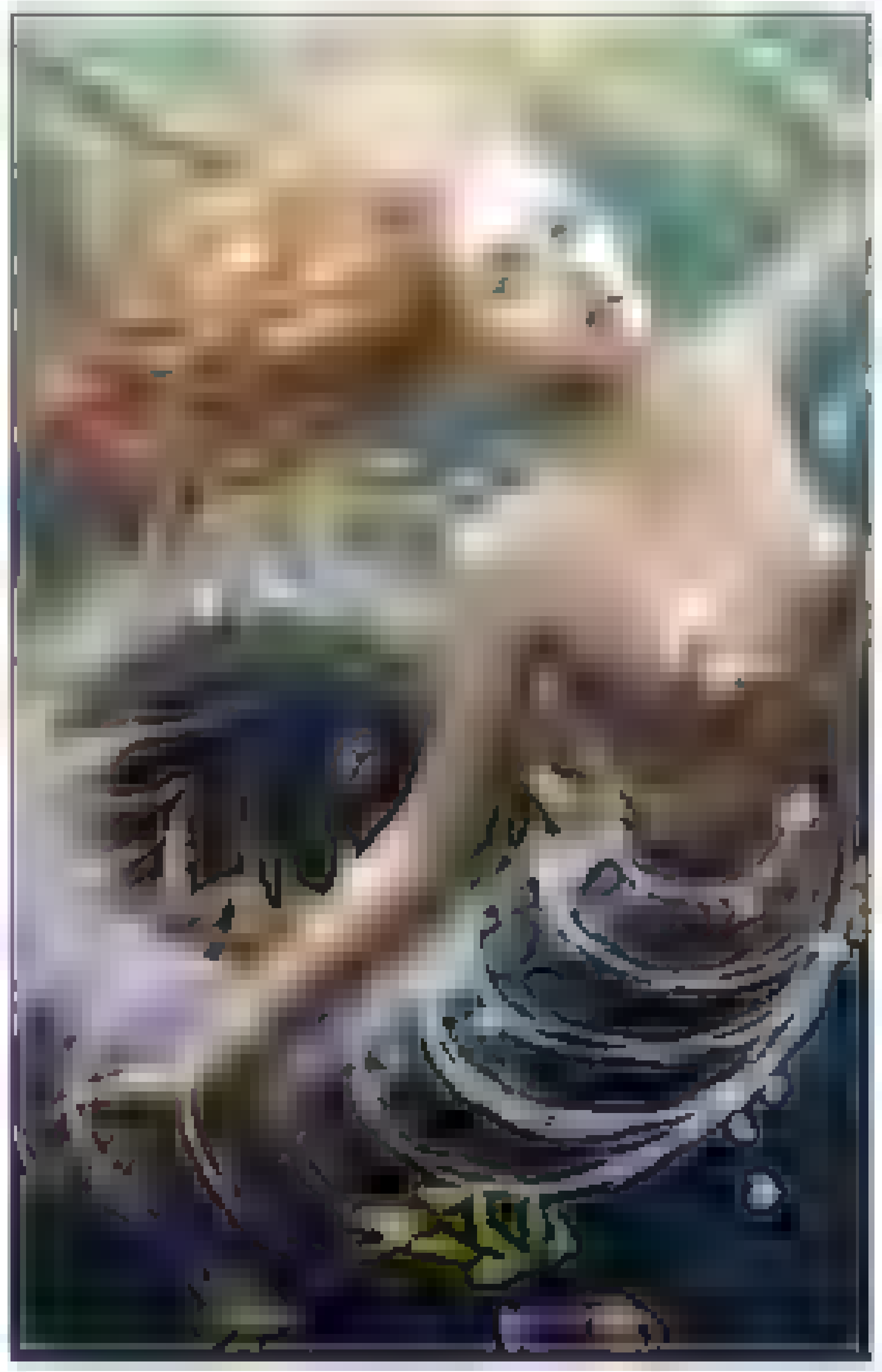


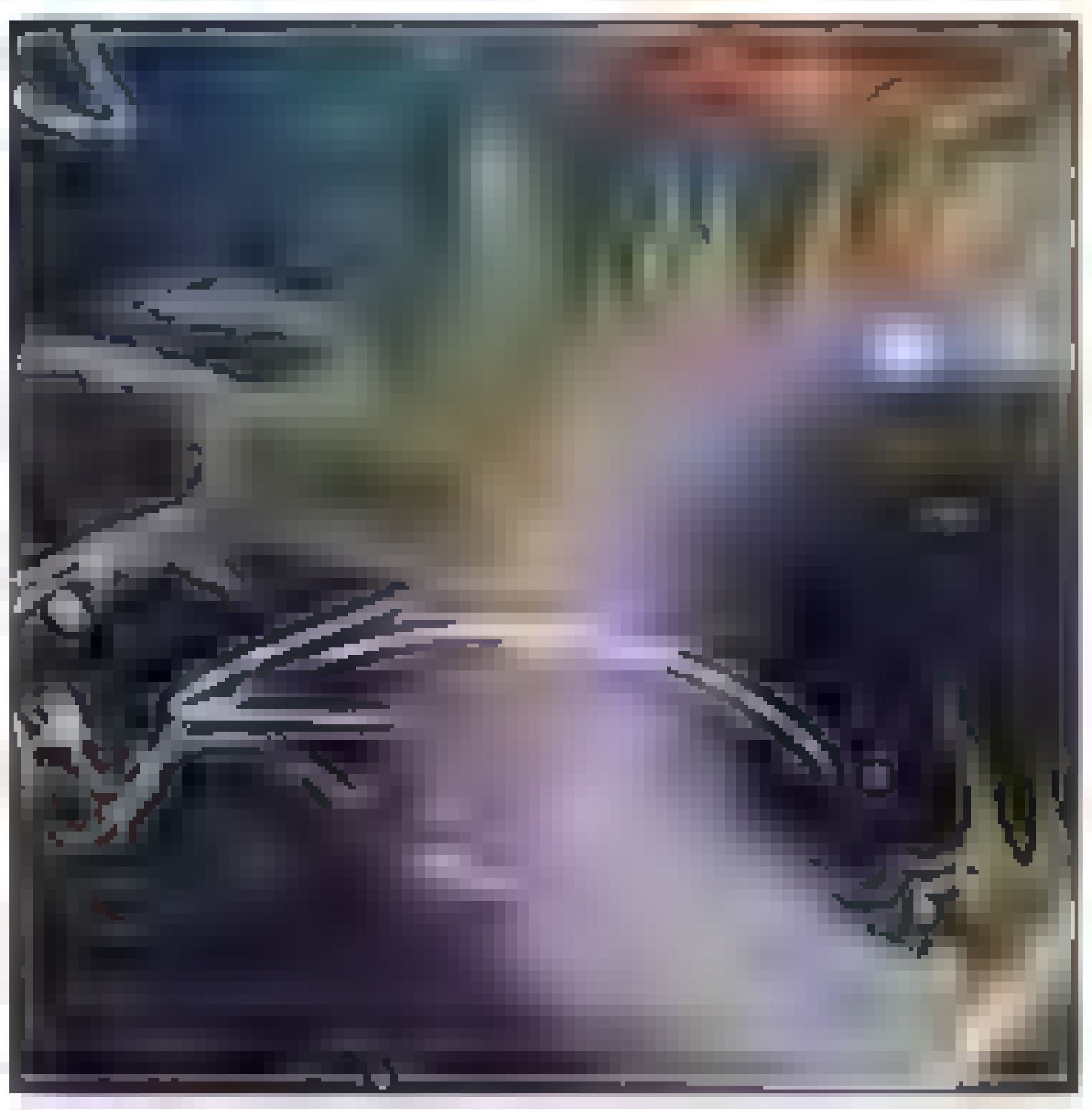
6 Changing the composition

I don't like working on a square format, so I decide to add more space to the bottom of the image. This area won't be used on the cover, but I need to feel comfortable about the painting and adding this part helps me to do so. I paint a few more underwater details in the background and foreground, mainly rocks where I plan to add more corals of differing colours. Although it's an underwater scene, there are plenty of opportunities for it to be colourful, instead of a monochromatic blue.

7 The mermaid's tail

Before I start working on the tail, I need to sketch the shape of it, to check that I'm going in the right direction. On another layer I quickly draw in line circles, which will also help me during the texturing stage. Don't hesitate to sketch over your painting when you're not sure about an element – doing this can sometimes help to solve a problem.



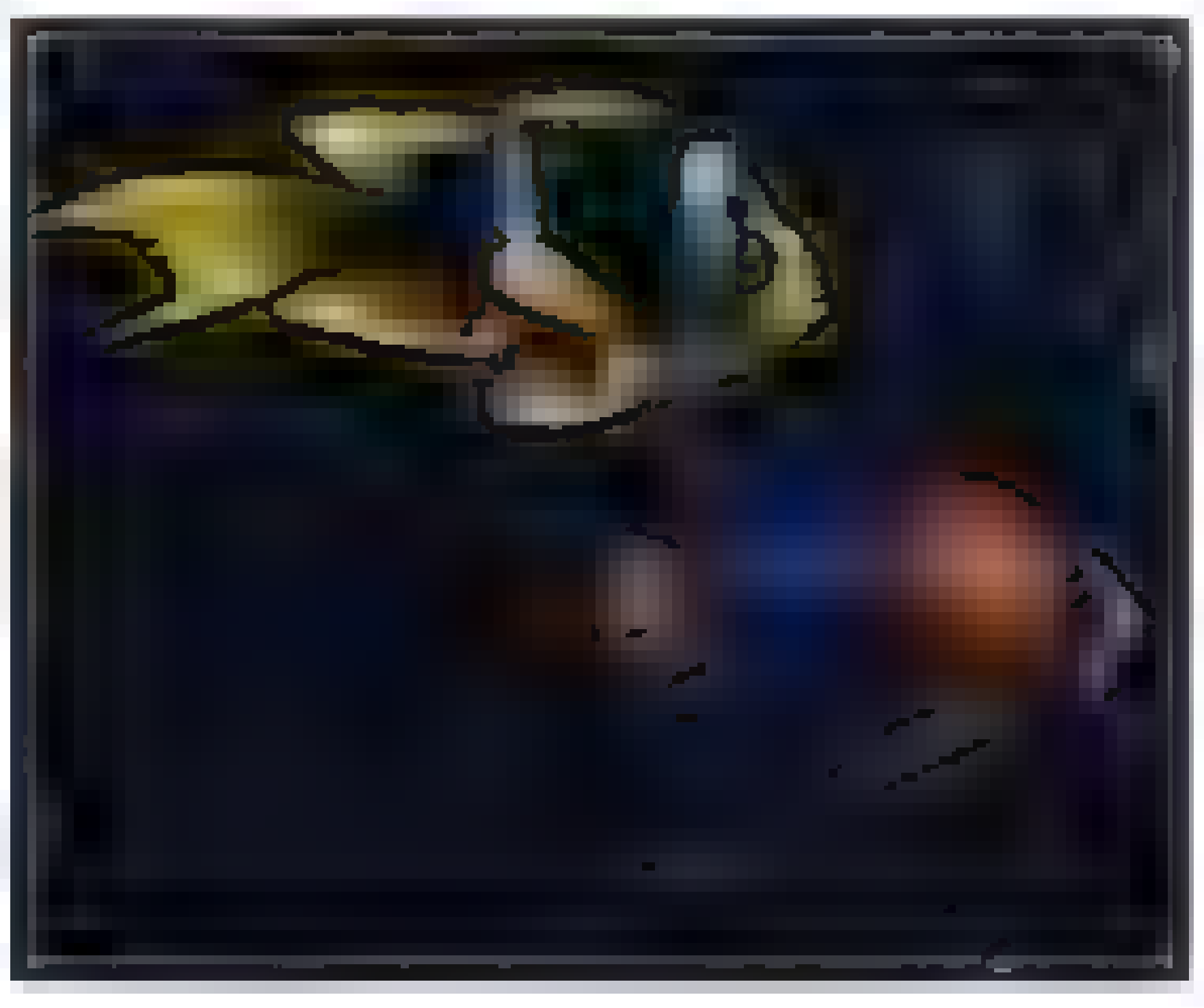


8 Dorsal fin

I decide to change the position of the dorsal fin near her left arm: it need to become more prominent. I sketch its new position on the tail – I want it to look soft and thin, like a veil. To create this effect I fill the space between the tail and the line with a custom brush, my soft one, and adjust the layer opacity if necessary.

9 Finalising the fish

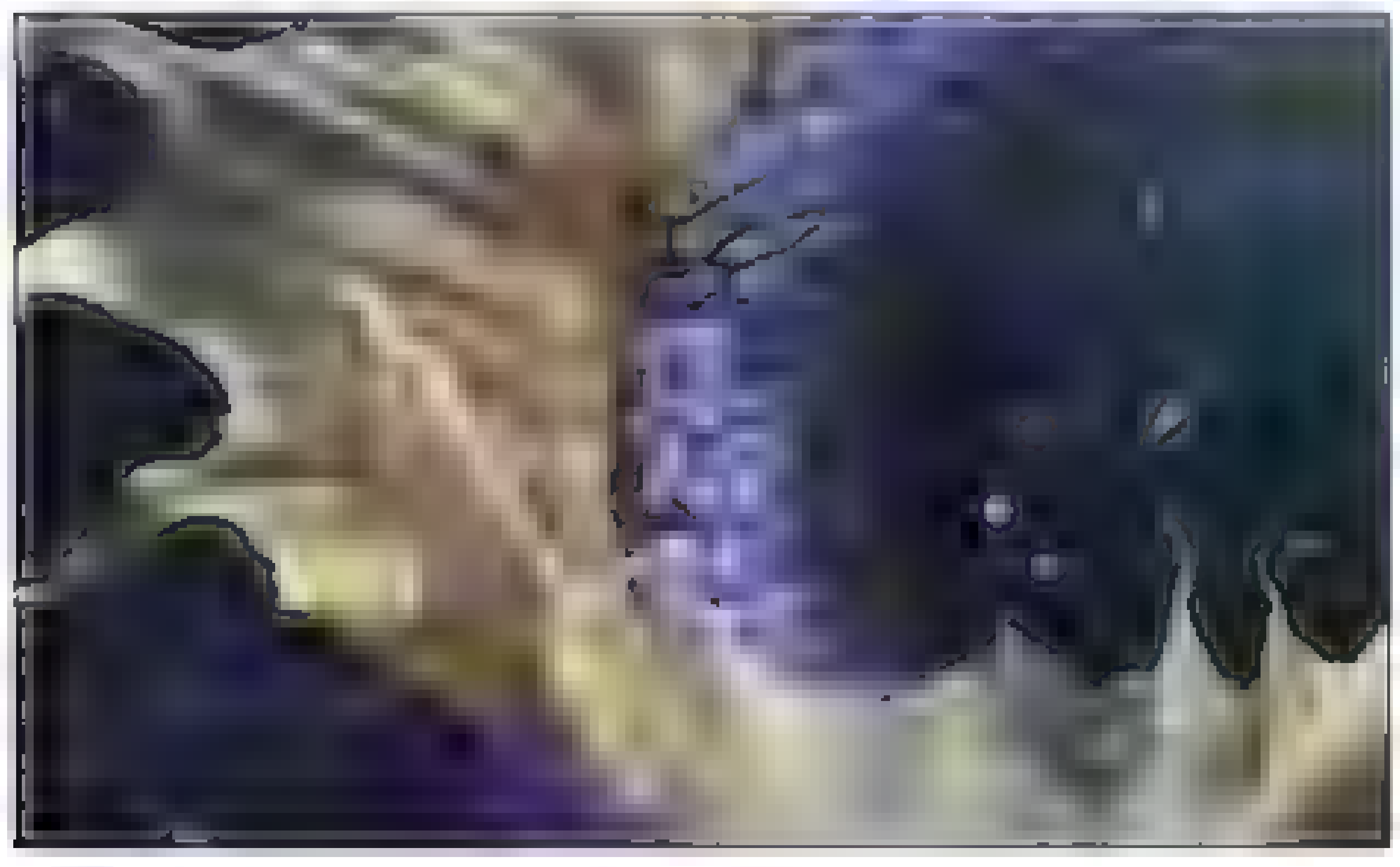
The fish need to be detailed as well but not too much because they're not the main subject of the painting. I just have to add small details, such as the eyes or spines on the fins. I usually do this with a Basic Round Edge brush set to Dynamic Shape and a minimum diameter of 0 per cent. This brush is perfect for painting small details. I blur and erase some parts of the fish, such as their tails, to blend them with the background.



Shortcuts
Hand tool
Space (PC & Mac)
[illegible]

10 Painting the coral reef

When you look at photographs of coral you soon realise it's made up of several colours. I'll use a custom brush for this element – it's the same one I use for painting leaves. All I have to do is to mimic the random dots of colours on the reef. I play with the settings a lot, using Wet Edges or Colour Dynamic to add variation.

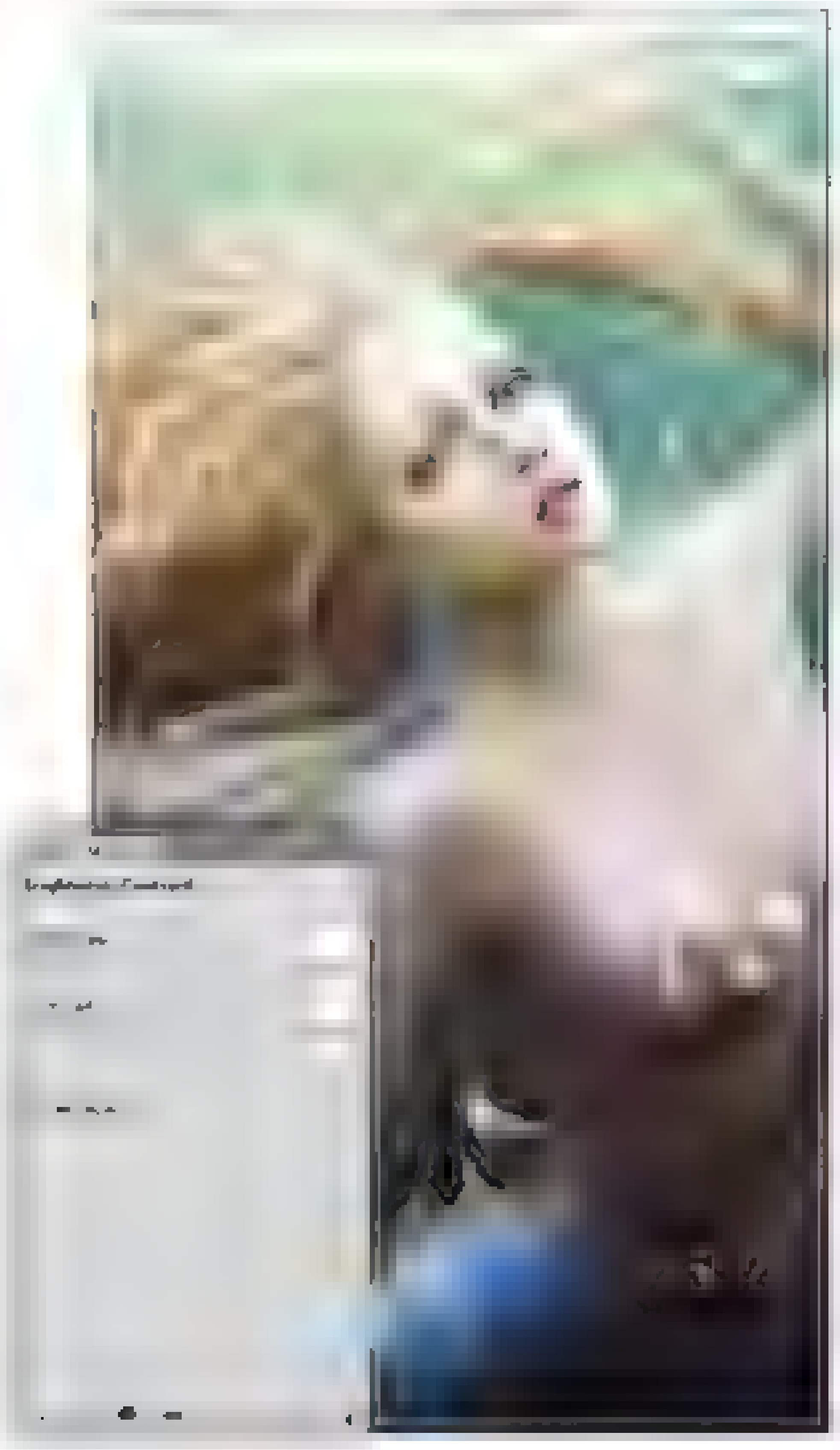


11 Texture the tail

It's time to add texture and detail to the tail, so I design patterns that'll cover the entire lower half of the mermaid. It's mainly dots of dark blue that follow the tail's shape and the dorsal fin. On top of this I'll add some scales. Rather than painting individual scales, I add hints of light here and there to bring a nice fantasy touch on the mermaid.

12 Tweaking the light

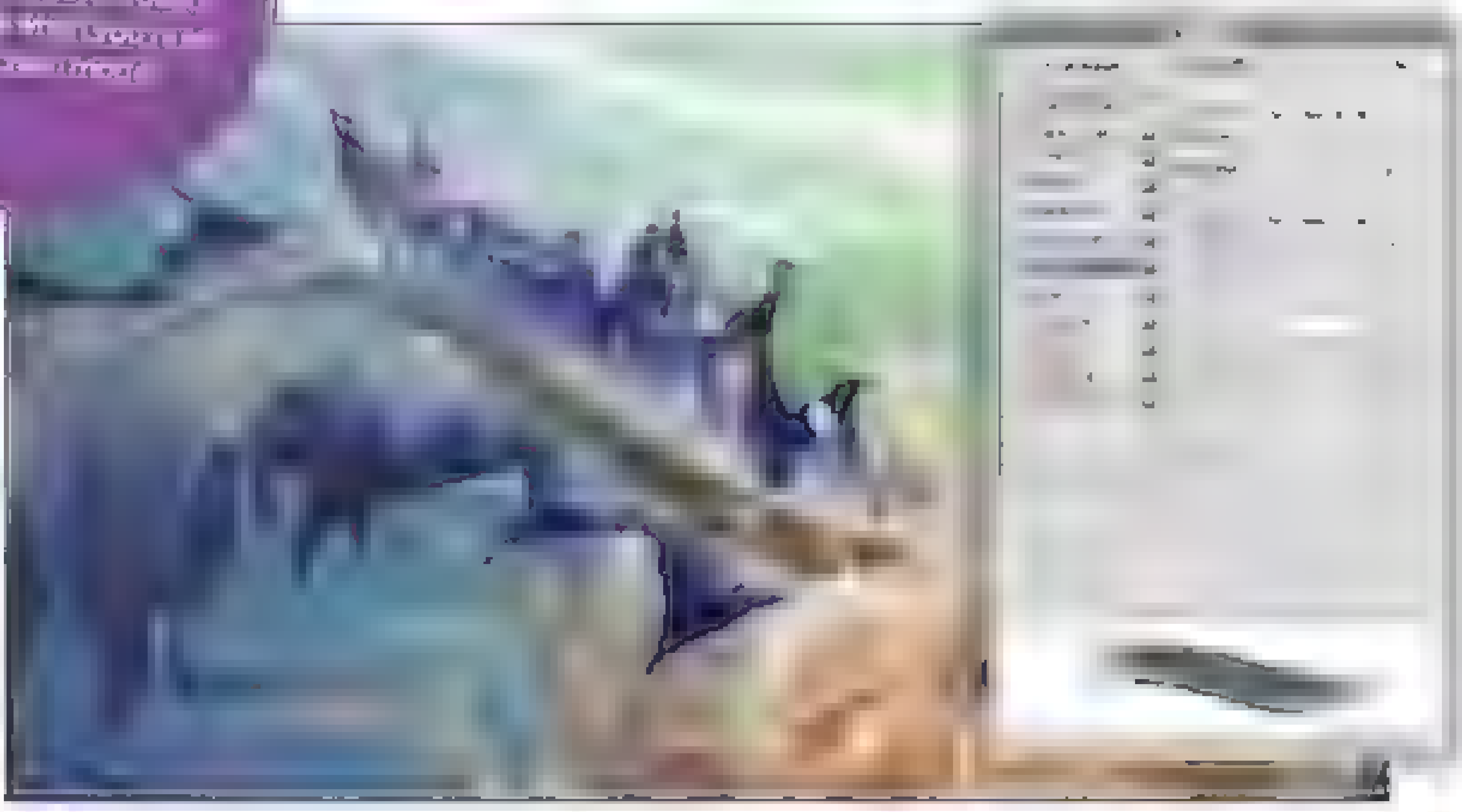
The image now needs an element of contrast, and Photoshop offers a set of great tools for this. I use Brightness/Contrast to adjust the light in the image, and add more blue. The light needs to be more dynamic, so on another layer I paint a soft block of bright green on the top of the painting around the wave line and set the layer to Linear Dodge. I always do this when I have to create special lighting.



PRO SECRETS

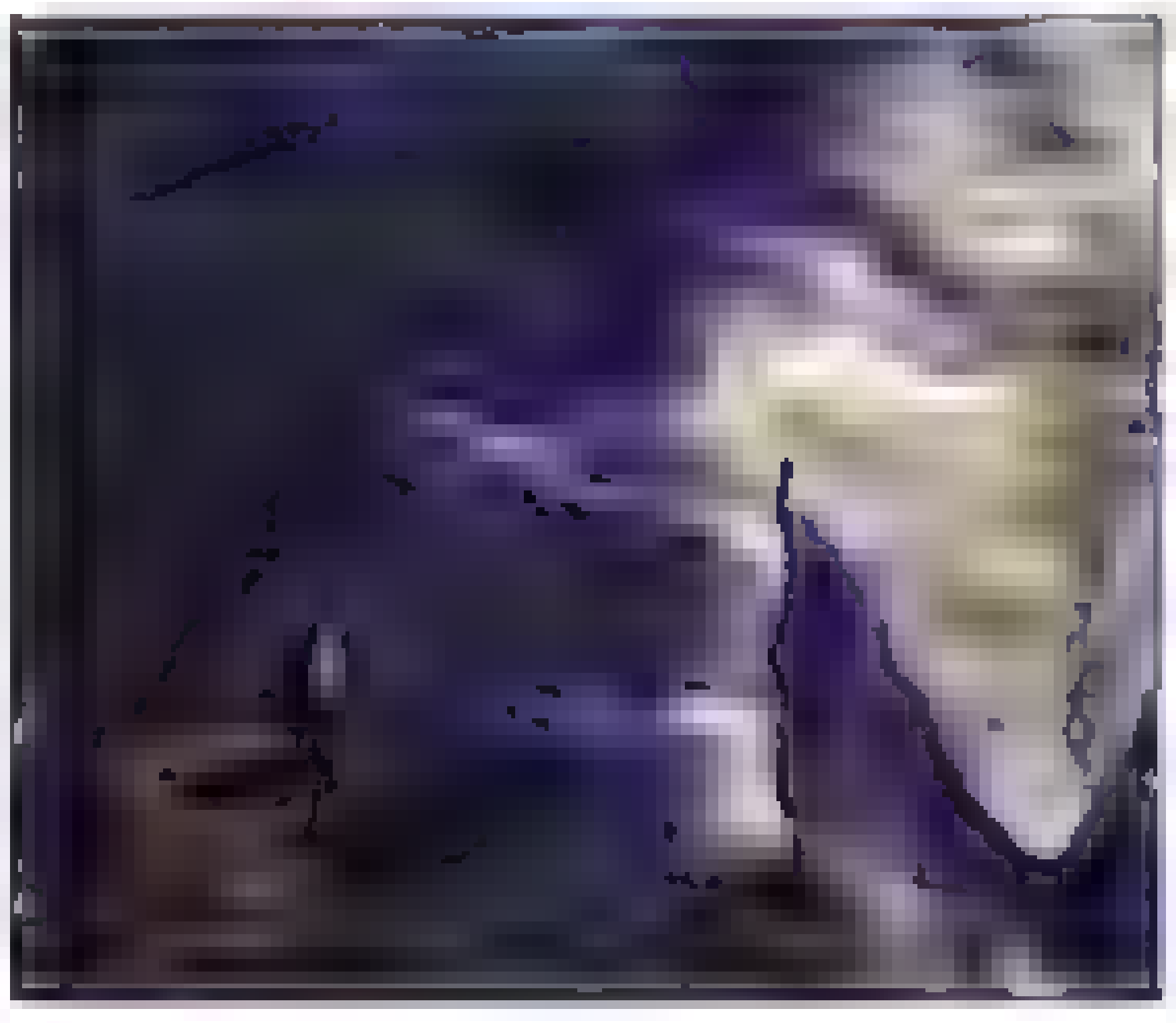
Blending

[illegible]



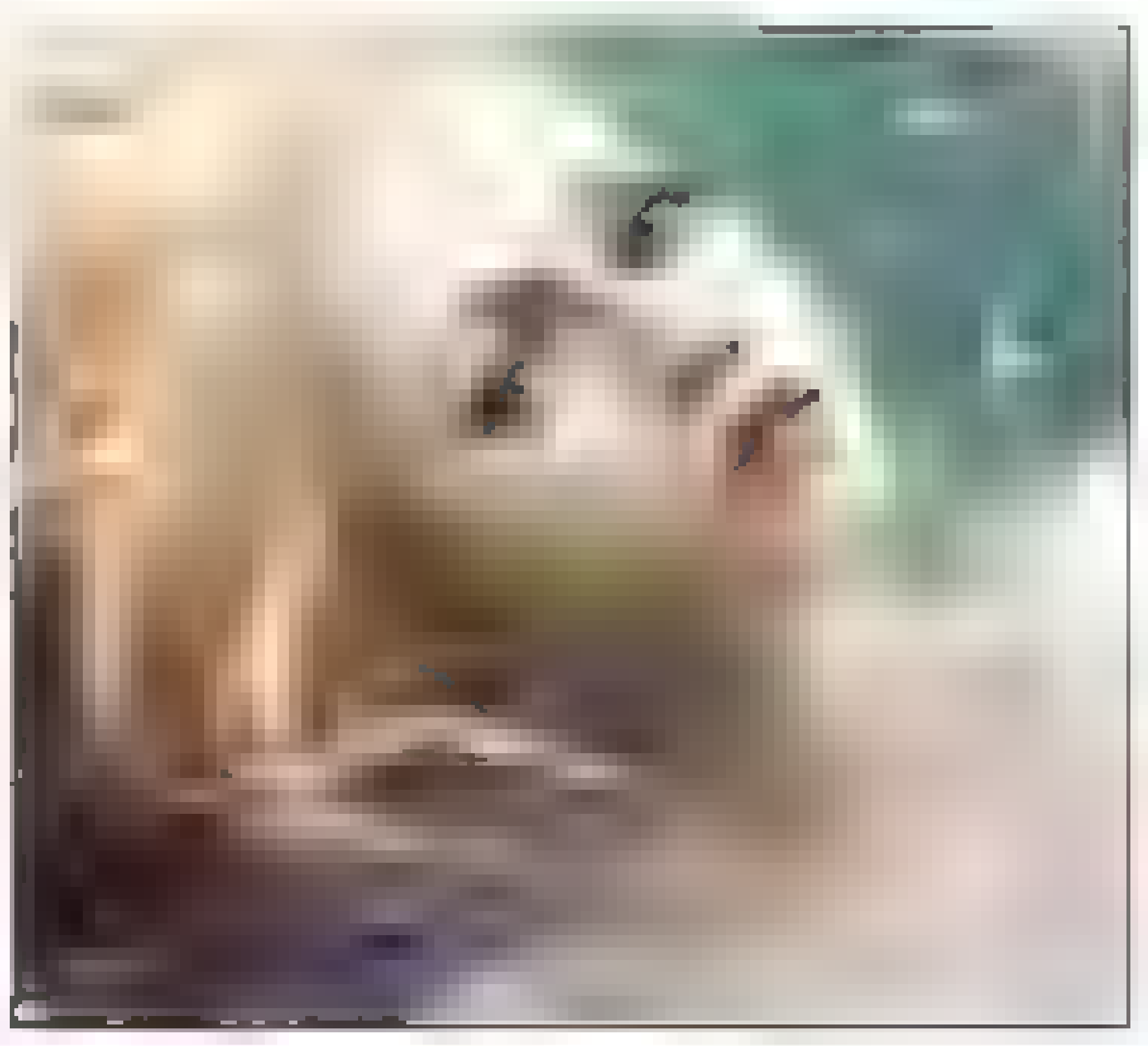
13 Altering the fin

I decide to change the fin style and add some deep blue mixed with a bright violet onto the extremities. This will add more colour variation to the light passing through the water. I paint with another custom brush for this step: I use it mainly for texturing because it introduces nice random brush strokes – exactly the kind I need for the fin. I also erase some parts on the extremities because I want them to look like rags: no clean outlines!



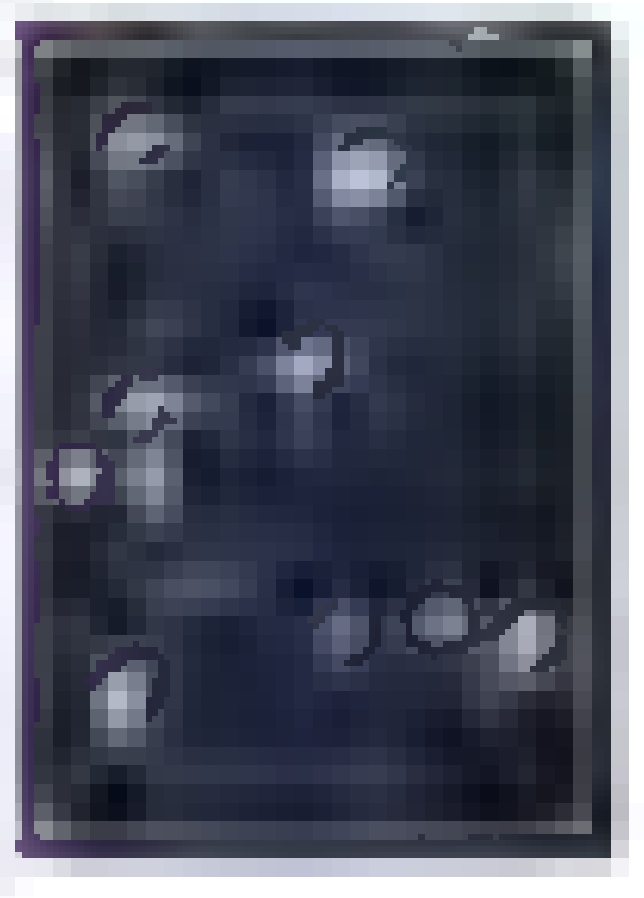
14 Adjusting the face and hair

The face needs more work, so I refine the lighting here. I also push the neck details and the contrast in her face. The hair is also too obvious: the strands too precisely painted. They must look like they're floating. So on another layer I add a huge block of bright yellow to emphasise the floating effect and blur some parts to blend it into the hair underneath.



15 Adding bubbles

Another important underwater element is the presence of bubbles, which will bring light and dynamism to the scene. I paint two kind of bubbles: the first one consists of a simple, very small dot of colour, done using a Basic Round Edge brush. For the second kind I depict real bubbles, and for convenience I paint a few of them on a layer, then duplicate and position the new ones where I want.

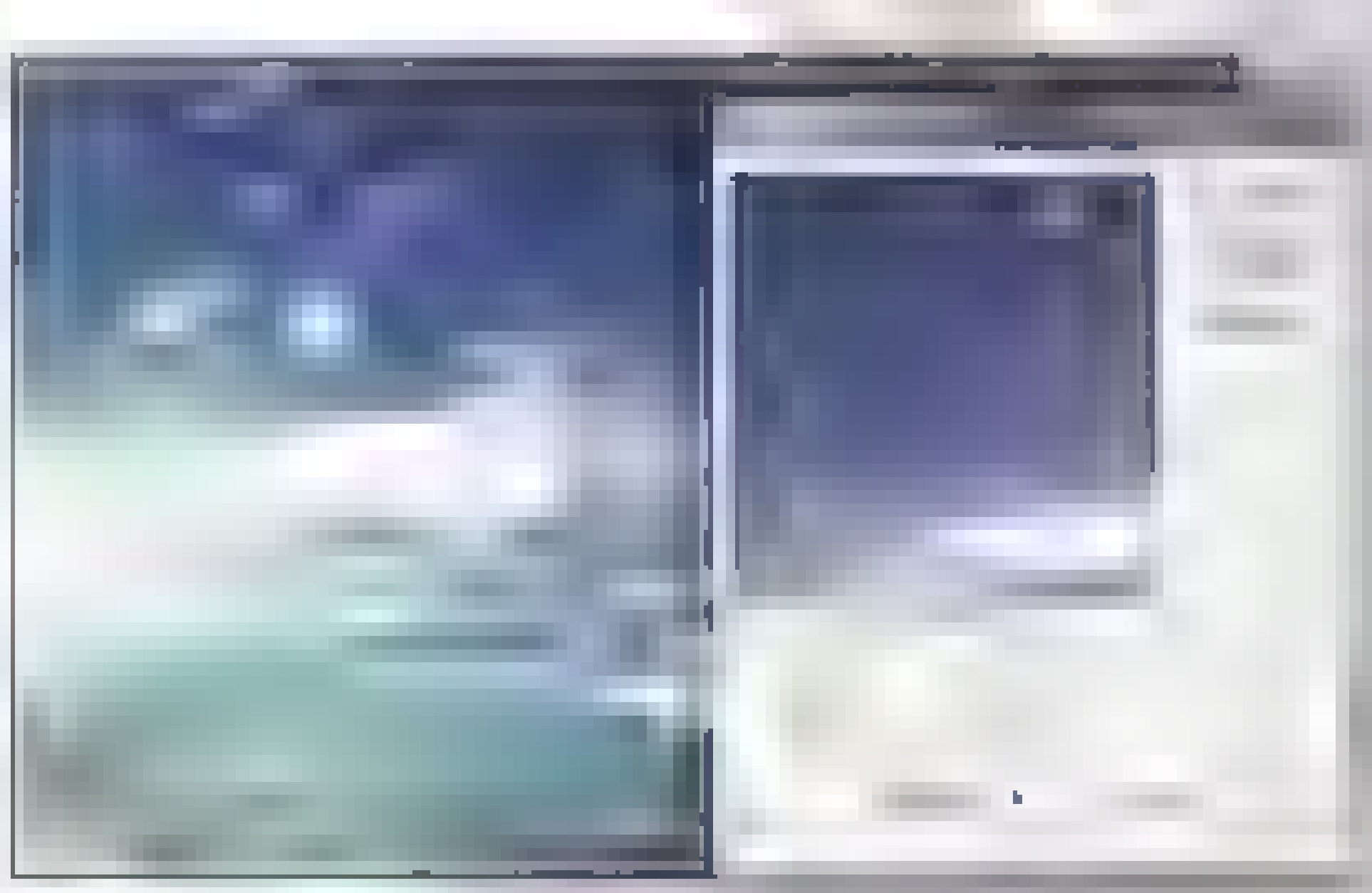


16 Wave light

The trick here is to pick a bright colour. I choose a pink, and paint brush strokes with a soft brush that follow the shape of the element. Once I'm happy with the wave light I change the mode of the layer to Color Dodge or Screen. Then I blur it, because the water is in constant movement and so this light mustn't be a sharp-edged shape.

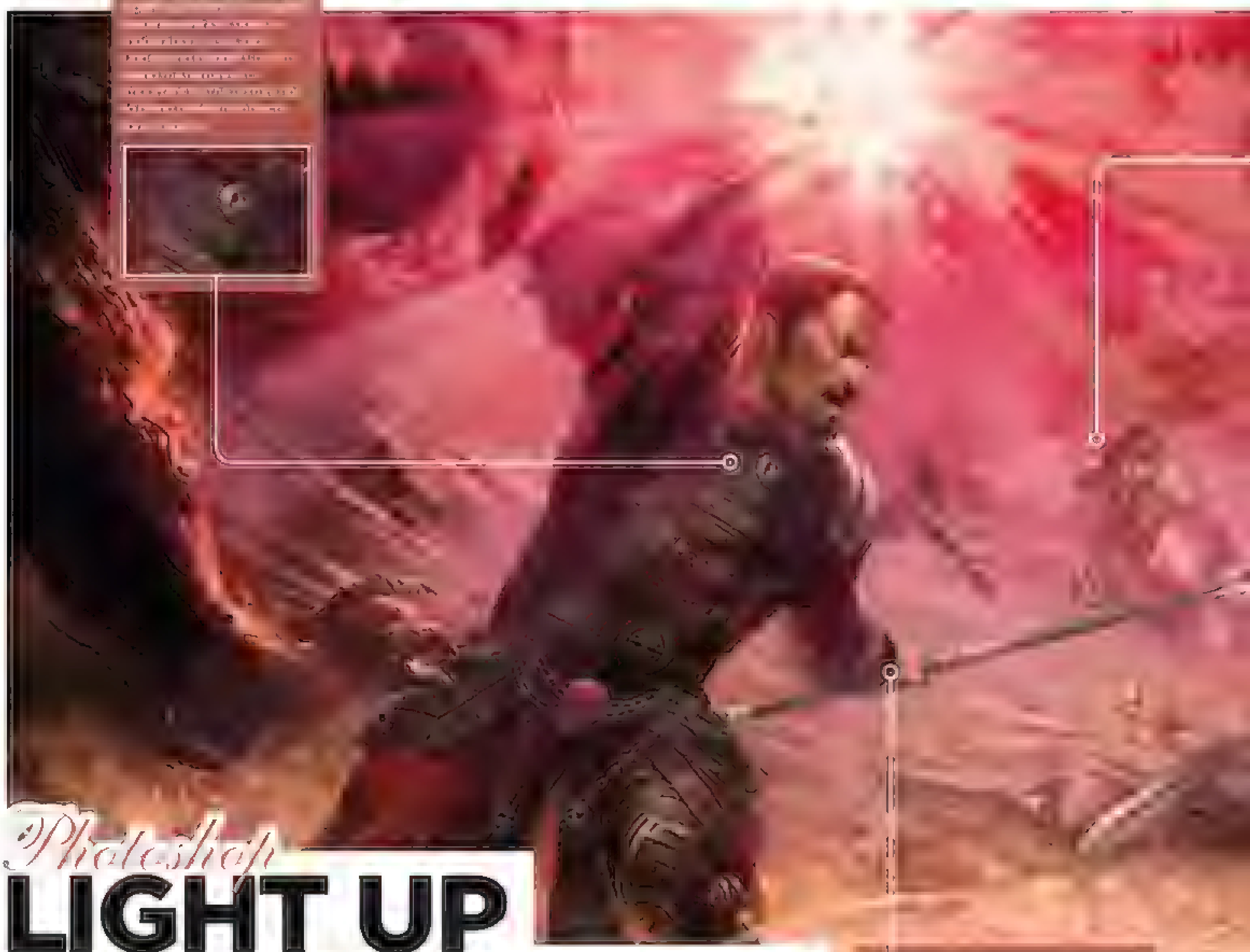
17 Special effects

The wave line is a combination of bubbles and water splashes. To give a pleasing moving effect I use the Motion Blur filter, setting it to around 10 pixels. I also introduce some wave light effect on the reefs. These have to be subtle because I don't want to attract the viewer's eye too much to this area of the painting.



18 Final touches

I'm almost done. All that's left to do is correct the general colour of the scene. For this I use the Photo filter on a Cooling setting at a low opacity. This gives more unity to the final piece and increases the underwater feeling. I add the final rays of light all around the character, and some extra dots of light and bubbles. Fin!



Use of textures

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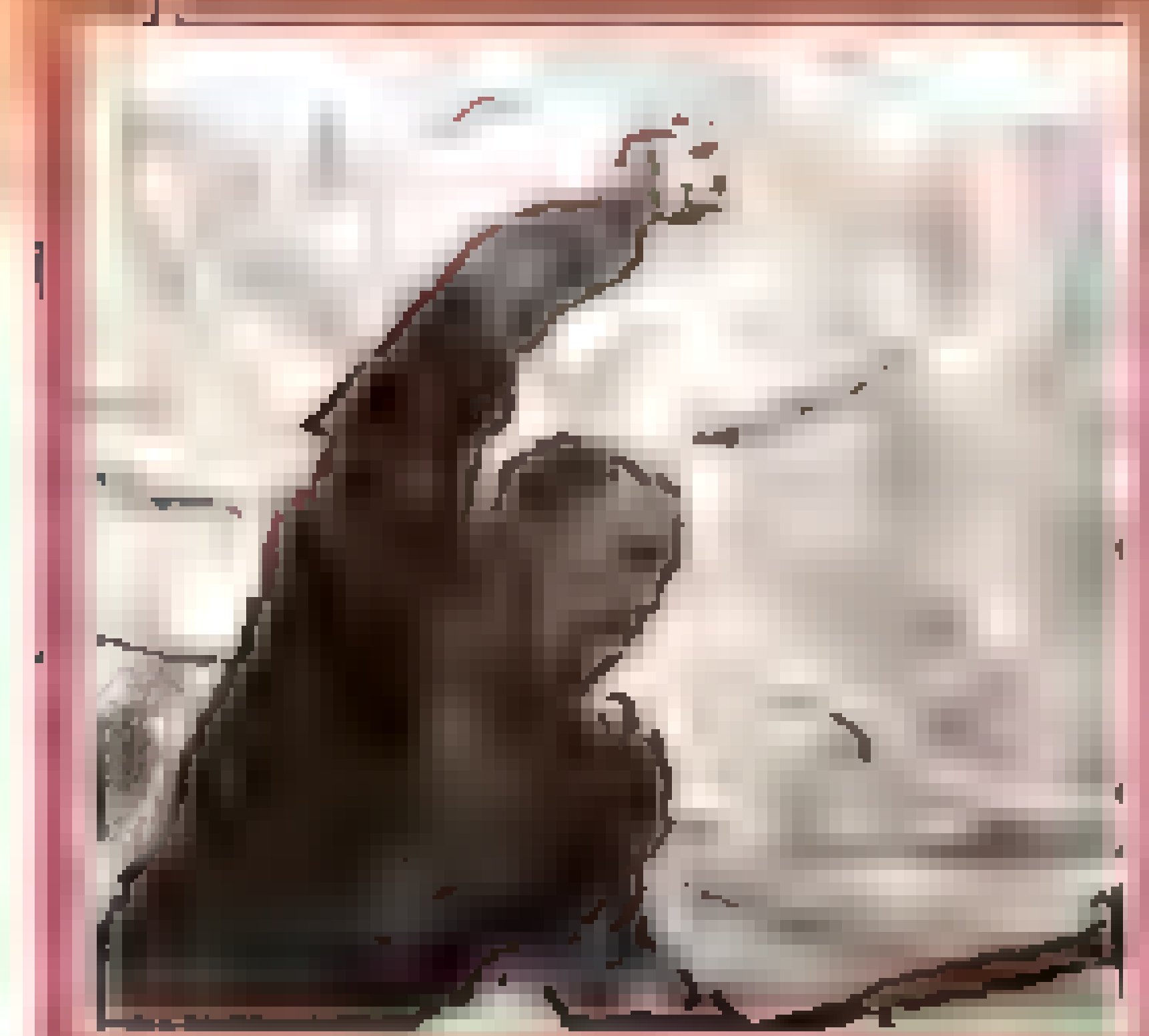


Show my heroic character in action

[illegible]

Photoshop

LIGHT UP A DARK CLASH

Svetlin Velinov paints a fight between good and evil, for use on a website

Artist **PROFILE**

Svetlin Velinov

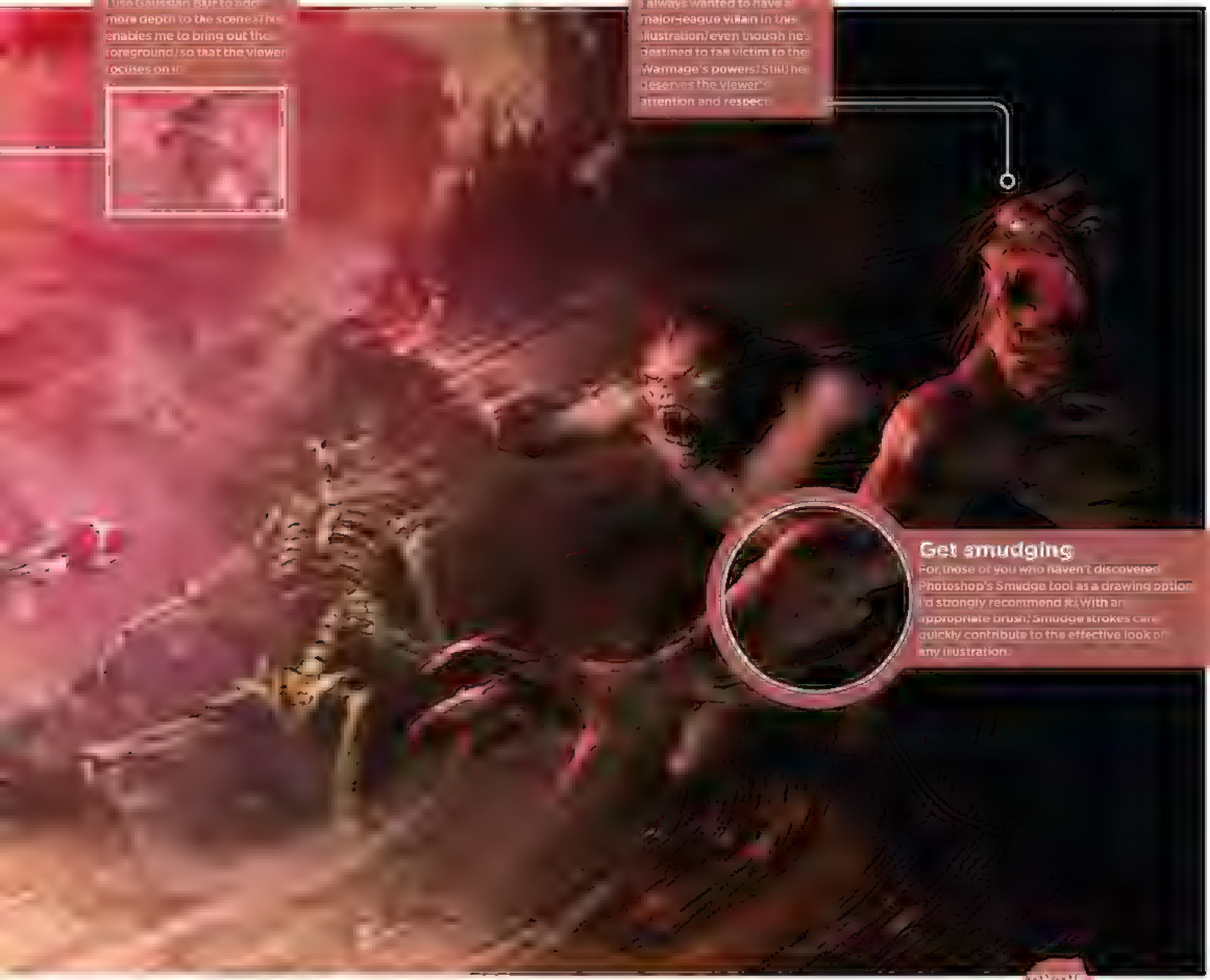
[illegible]

DVD Assets

[illegible]

This image is part of a series of demo illustrations for the up-and-coming browser based game Hellbreed Hack and Slash (**hellbreed.net**). The main challenge was to ensure that the action-based compositional elements of my work fitted the strict layout of the website, taking into account objects such as menu screens and branding information.

Along the way I was forced to make a lot of compromises to my usual painting style, which is one of impulse and basically drawing what feels right in the moment. My approach always takes precedence over whether an image follows the usual rules of composition, features correct perspective, or some other 'art basics' consideration. Essentially, it's emotions and feelings first, with technical flair coming a distant second. But as I say, my work for the website had to take into account the bigger picture, so to speak. It wasn't a straightforward assignment by any means – I hope I've been successful in my task



Control the view

I use Gaussian Blur to add more depth to the scene. This enables me to bring out the foreground, so that the viewer focuses on it.

Paint a bad guy

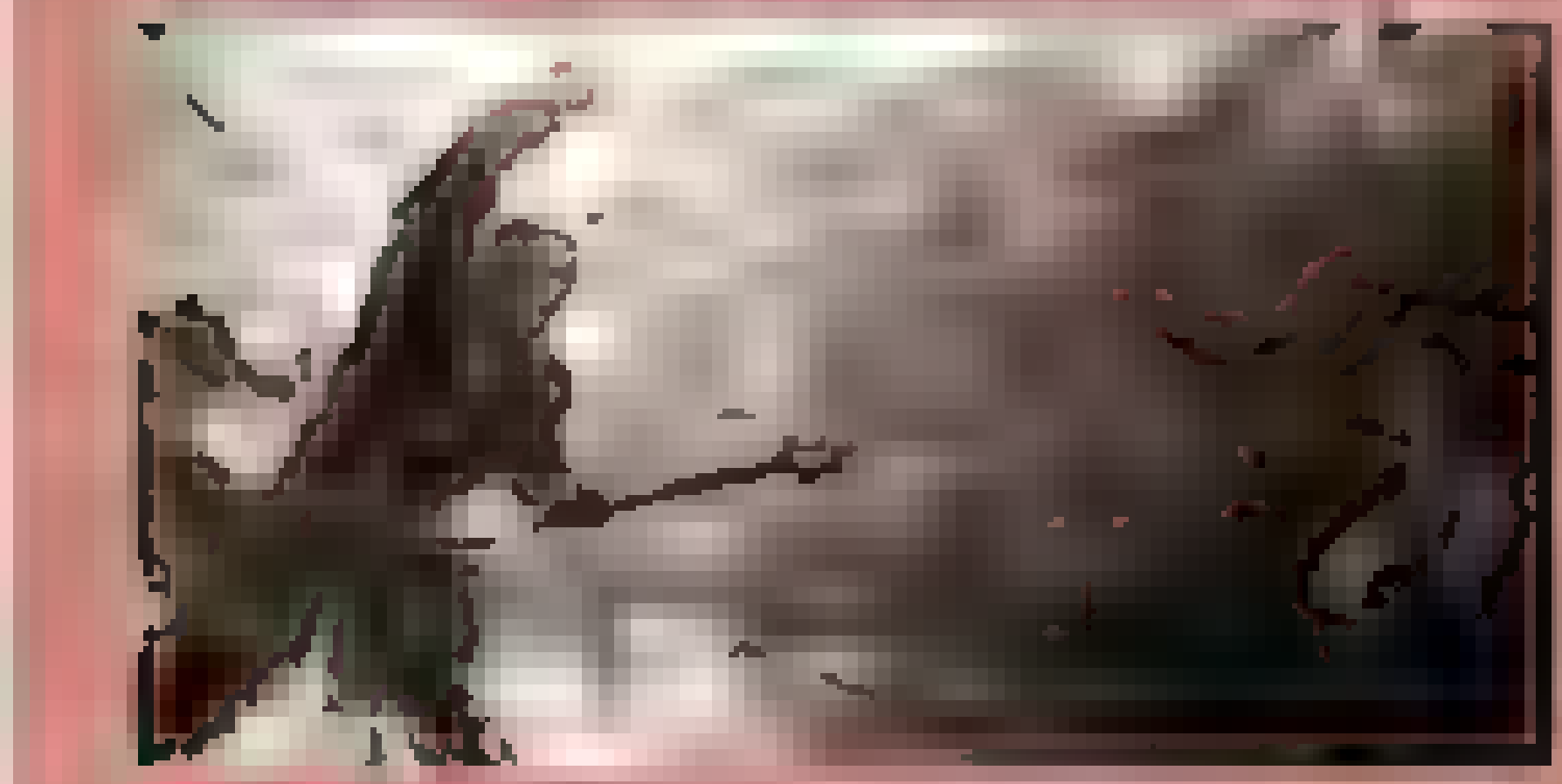
I always wanted to have a major-league villain in this illustration, even though he's destined to fall victim to the Warmage's powers. Still, he deserves the viewer's attention and respect.

Get smudging

For those of you who haven't discovered Photoshop's Smudge tool as a drawing option I'd strongly recommend it. With an appropriate brush, Smudge strokes can quickly contribute to the effective look of any illustration.

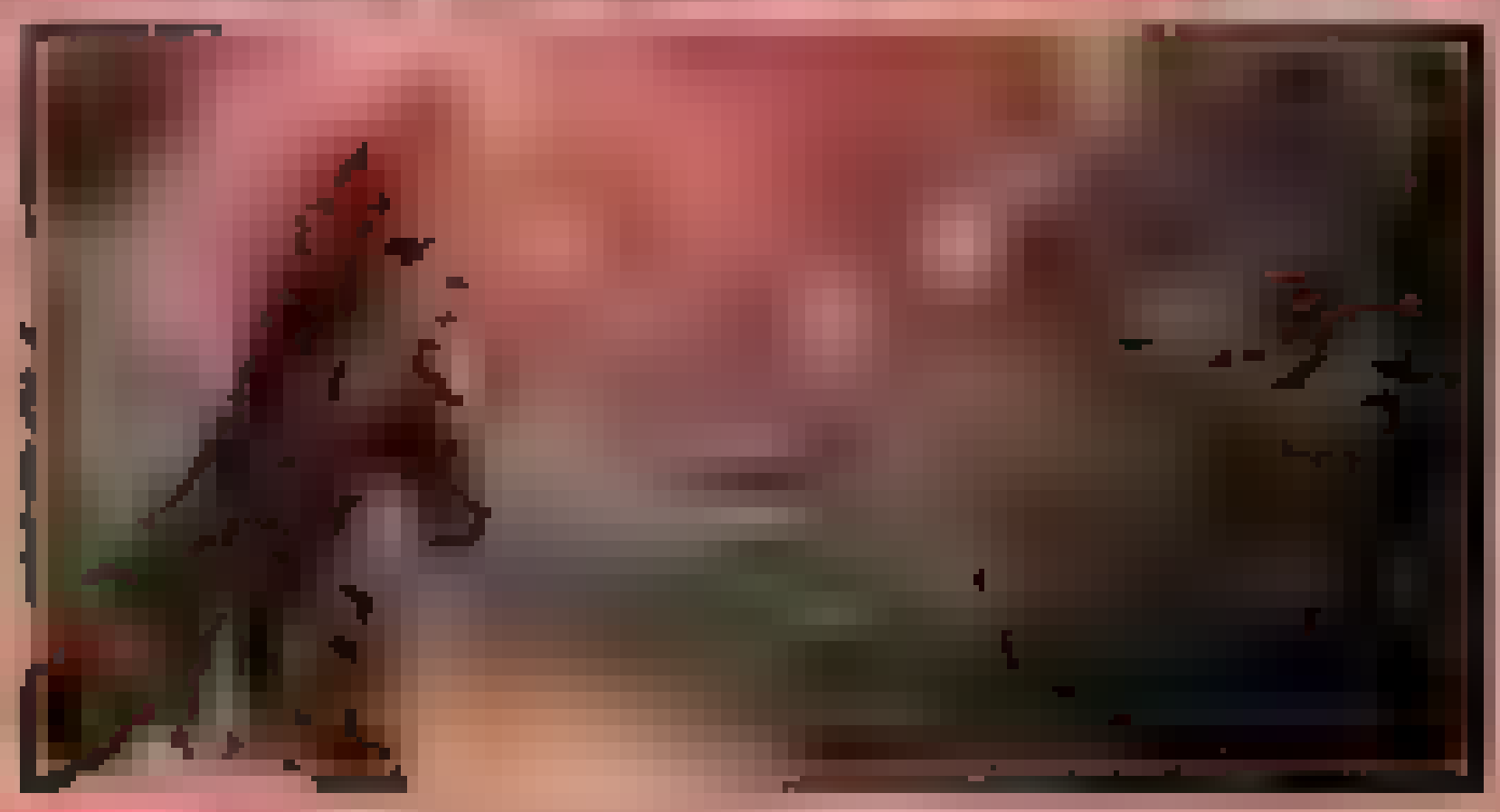
How I create…

AN UNDERGROUND BATTLE



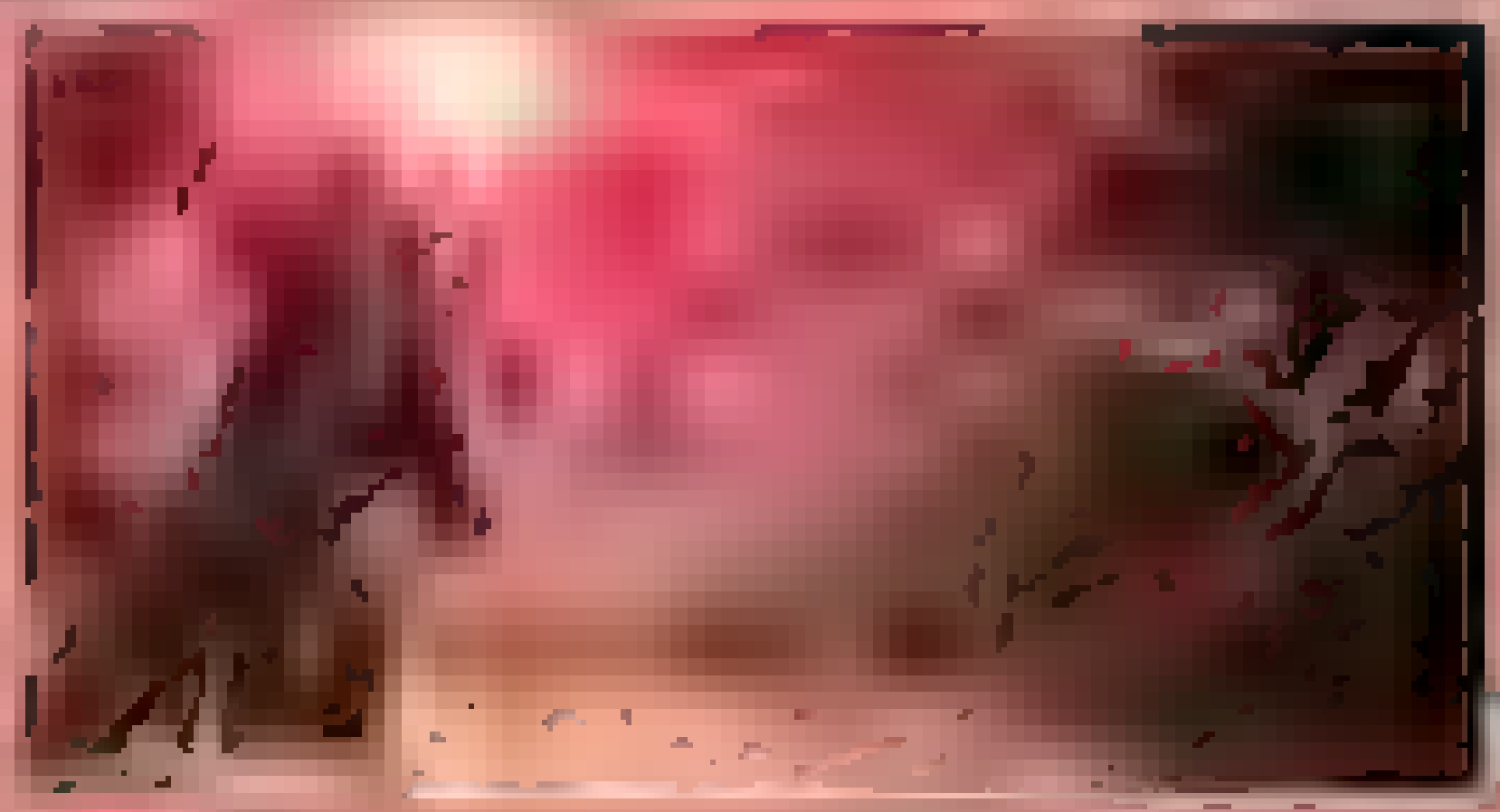
1 Sketch my ideas

The position of the main character is already decided, so it's pretty easy for me to come up with the right posture. Making full use of the rest of the surrounding space is slightly trickier, however, because of the website constraints. By taking out the silhouettes, defining the volumes and the sources of light I get an idea of how to develop the illustration in colour.



2 Choose my colours

The light source defines – and limits – my choices of colour. During this step I spend too much time detailing secondary elements that'll remain unnoticed in the final image. Never lose sight of the image that you imagined before putting stylus to canvas. Such self-control is difficult, but will free up time for final tweaks and flourishes at the end of the painting process.



3 Strengthen the scene

The axe-wielding skeleton adds depth to the scene, while the beast on the right complements the composition. The latter character now interacts with the Warmage, providing tension and threat, and is strongly lit by the spell's red fire. The sense of wind created by the spell is created using custom brushes and random strokes, along with Motion Blur.

ON THE DVD

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: OIL PASTEL

I sketch with an adapted standard Oil pastel brush because it creates volume and texture.

ARTISTIC BRUSH 2

This is one of my favourite brushes, which adds a painterly look to the illustration. Here I use it with the the Smudge tool.

ENHANCE THE FACE OF A CHARACTER

Learn how to add interest and realism to a classic portrait shot with Lauren K Cannon's help

Artist PROFILE

[illegible]

Lauren is a freelance illustrator of dark fantasy

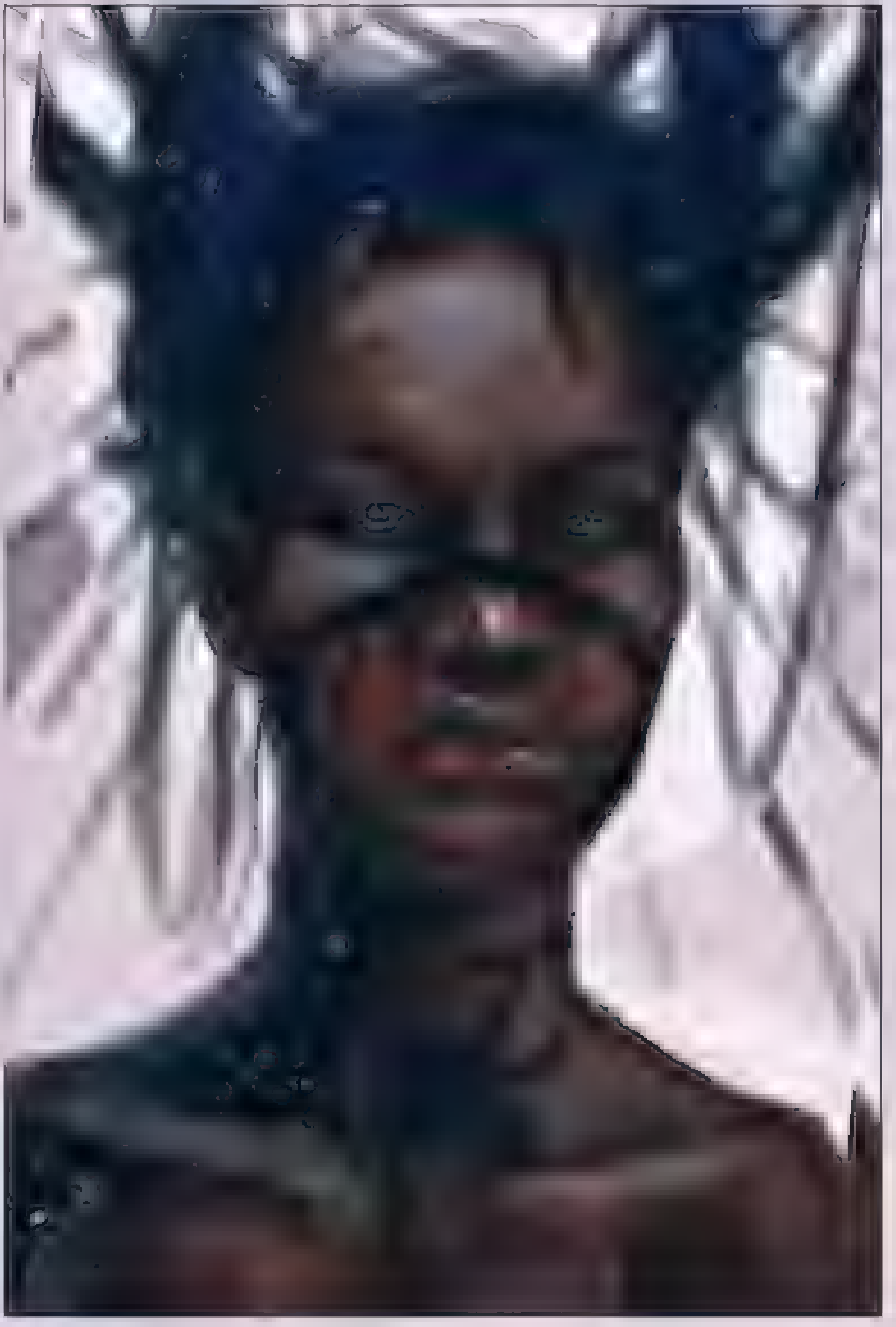
[illegible]

Painting faces gives me the same satisfied feeling that indulging in comfort food does for most people. But I hate painting things that feel boring, so I'm often faced with the challenge of how to make my portraits more interesting, and not repetitive. The solution lies in two areas. First, focus on the face itself. This step is crucial. Invest time into getting every element right, from the skin tone to the lighting to the expression. Don't be tempted to cut corners and skimp on the details, the more believable a face is, the more of a story it can tell.

Second, incorporate design and decoration as a way to push your narrative further. Clothes, colours, jewellery, symbols – think carefully about each of these things. They can be powerful indicators of a character's personality or situation, as well as highly effective design elements. Even an abstract background can add interest to an image if properly composed.

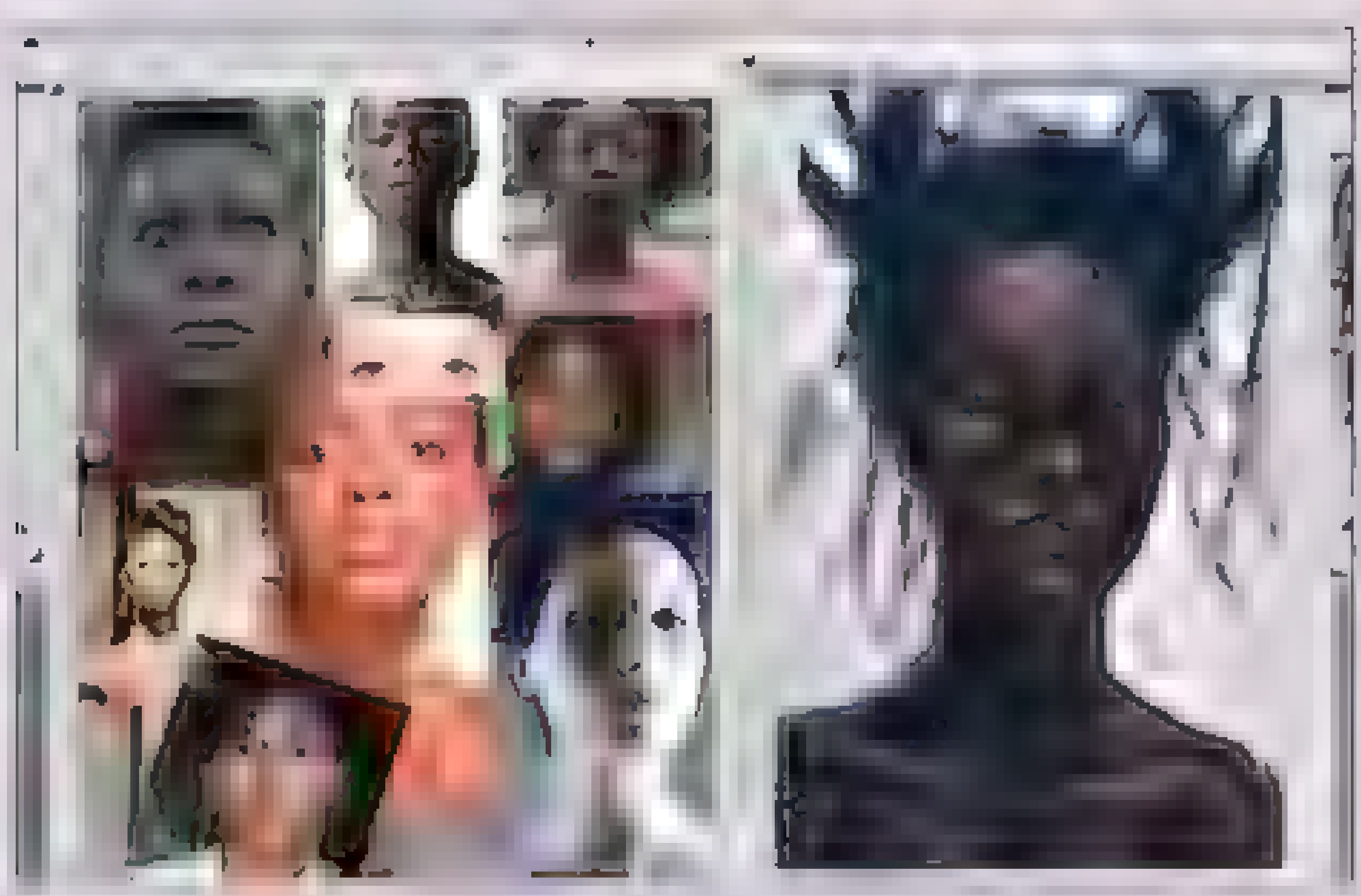
This workshop focuses on building a skin tone, painting correct facial structure and enhancing a simple face to make something more involving through character design, colour use and symbolism. I won't be covering anatomy or in-depth colour theory, although they are crucial to painting people. Be sure to invest time into studying both these subjects – the more you master them, the better your facial portraits will be.

I use Photoshop and Painter, but my technique can be recreated in any decent painting program. For a more in-depth look at how skin tones are constructed, enjoy the series of free tutorials on my website, at navate.com/extras.



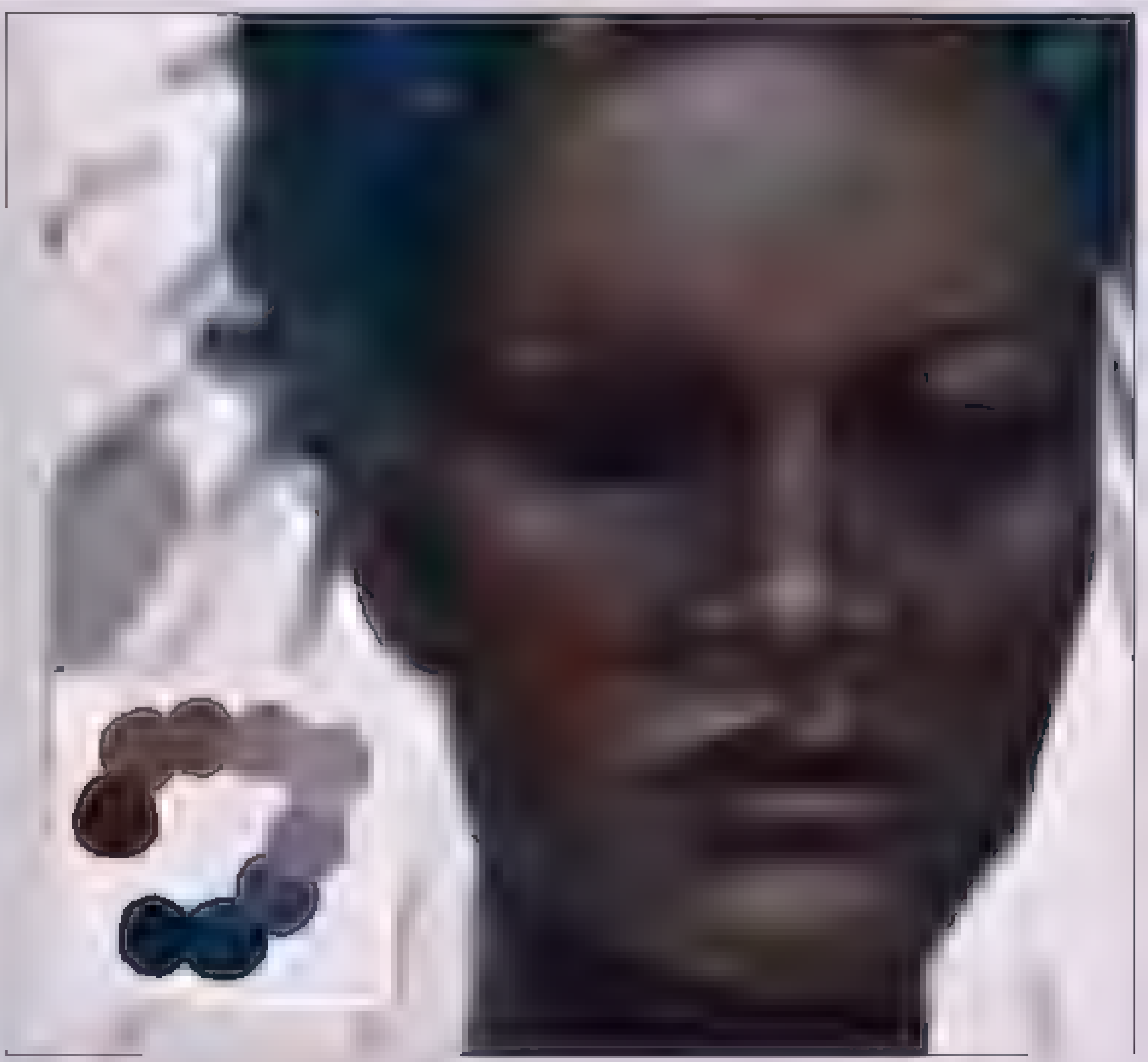
1 Create an idea sketch

When it comes to portraits, I tend to skip the planning stage and hit the ground running – give it a go. As soon as inspiration strikes, I make a quick colour sketch of my idea in Photoshop. I can smooth out references, colour and lighting later, so I don't worry about how ugly this initial sketch might look! The important thing is to preserve the core idea: in this case, a mysterious girl whose skin evokes the night sky.



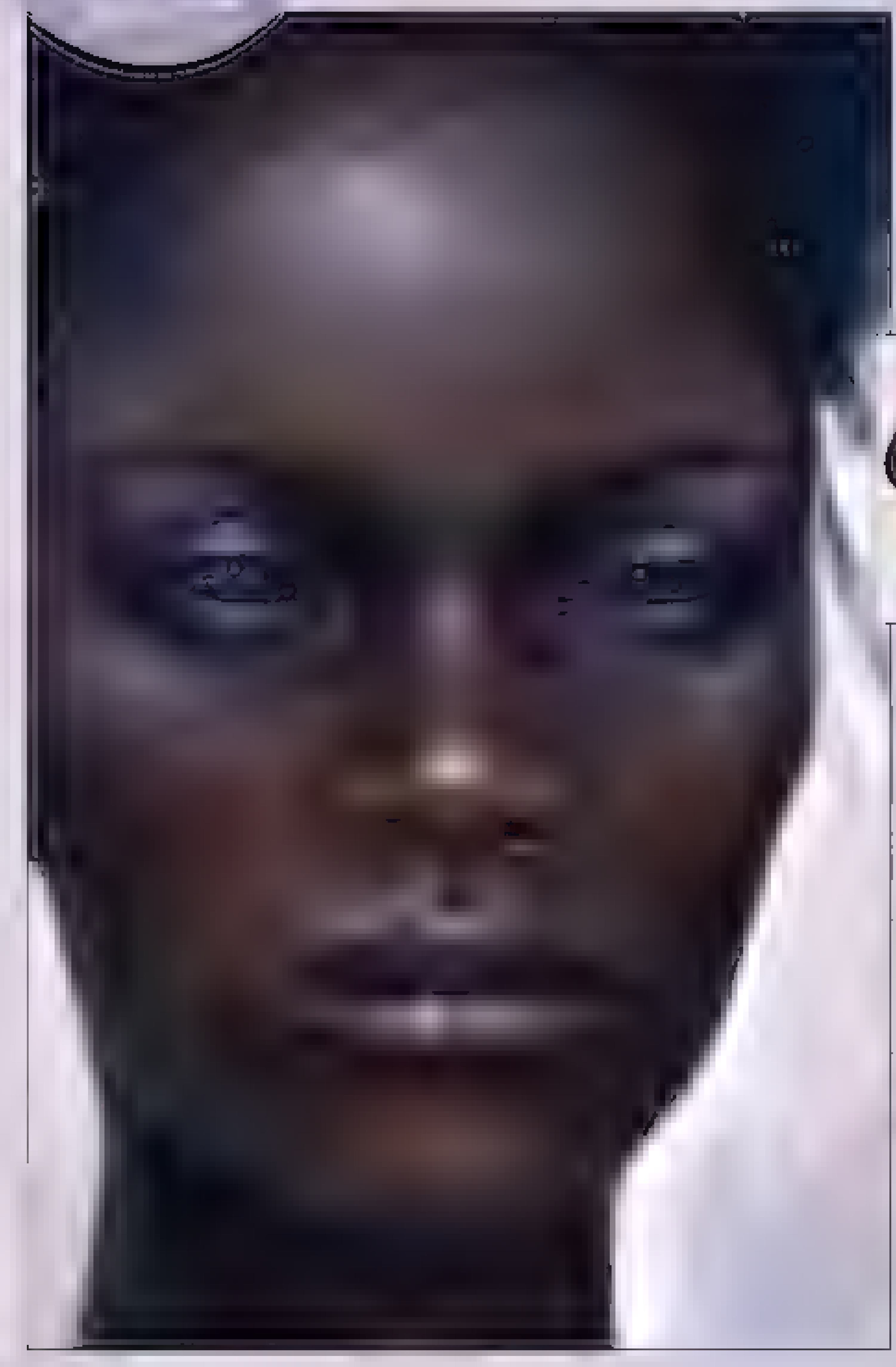
2 Create a reference pool to work from

Now I gather reference photographs from magazines, websites and perhaps my own photo albums. Even though I'm creating a unique face, it's important to collect a sampling pool of approximate references with the pose, skin colour and facial features that represent what I envision. If I work completely from pictures in my head I'll make mistakes and forget the nuances that help to make a face look real. Placing a reference pool – such as the one pictured above – alongside my work means I can take ideas from it and cobble together a face that, while unique, is still grounded in reality.



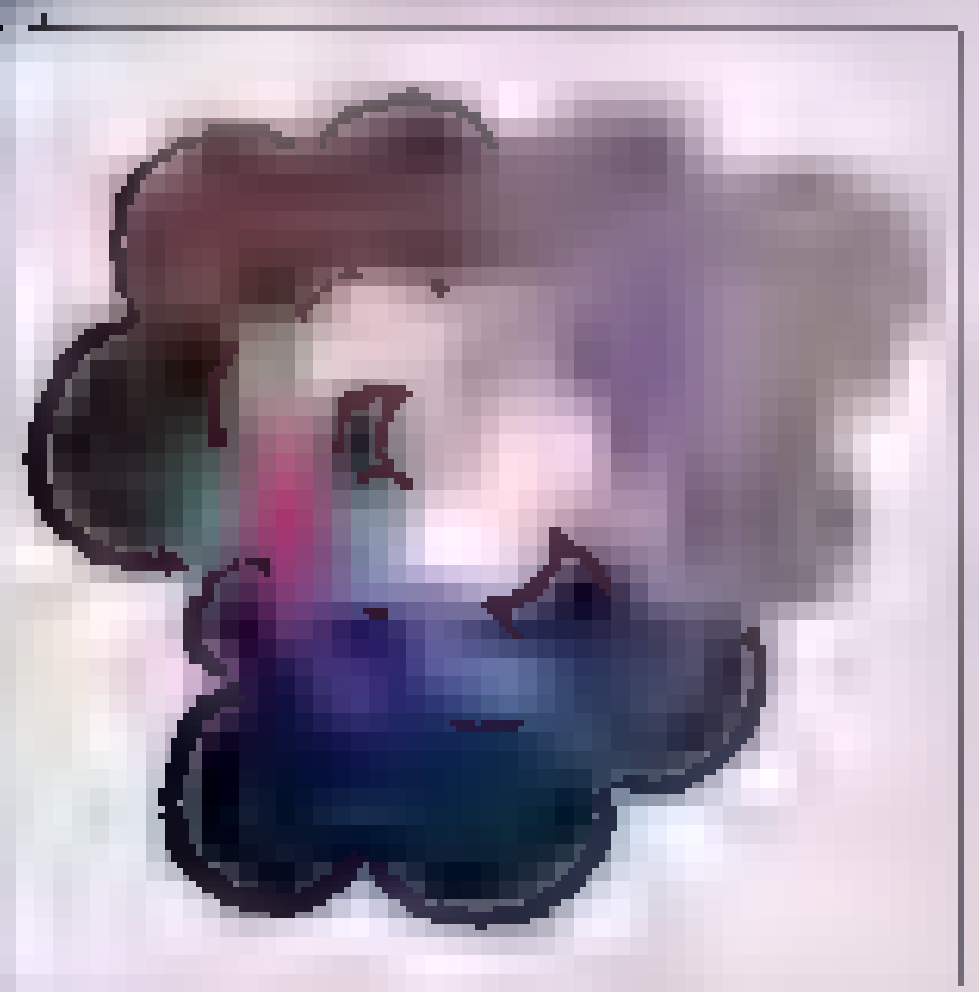
3 Focus on the face form

I pull the costume design onto its own layer, leaving the face clean so I can focus on its form. I choose a simple skin palette to help me build the form and lay down colour with a large round brush, concentrating on the peaks and hollows of the face. With dark skin, the relationship between the mid-tone and highlight is pretty stark, so conveying a sense of form early on is extra important.



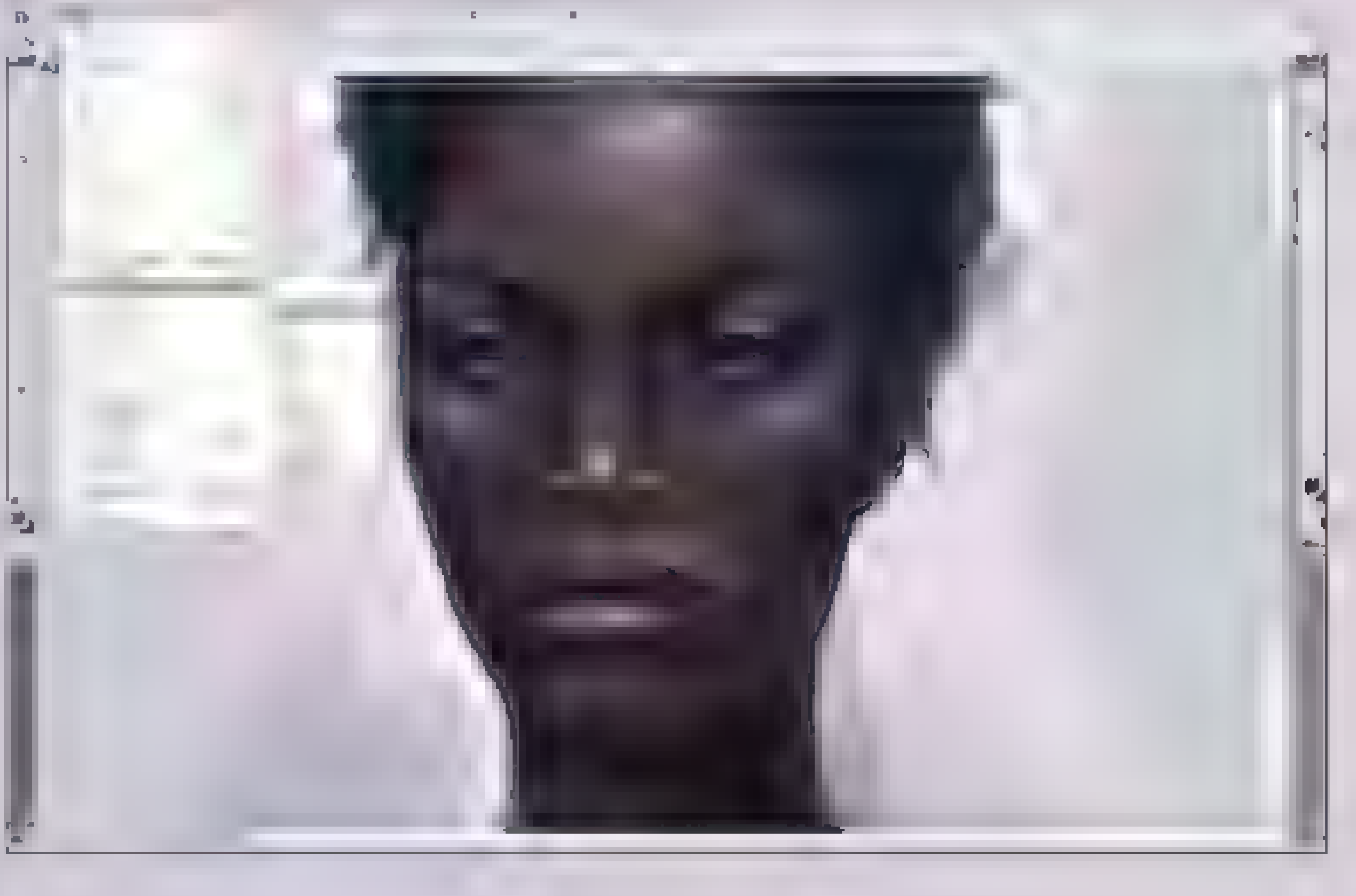
4 Build the skin tone

Once I'm satisfied with the basic form, I concentrate on making the skin more complex and varied. This is the key to realism. I use the deep blue I want to have in the shadows as a base point, and add in lavenders, purples and blues all over the skin, but particularly around the eyes to push the mysterious quality. I take care not to overpower the red and brown tones – all skin tones need a mix of cooler and warmer colours.



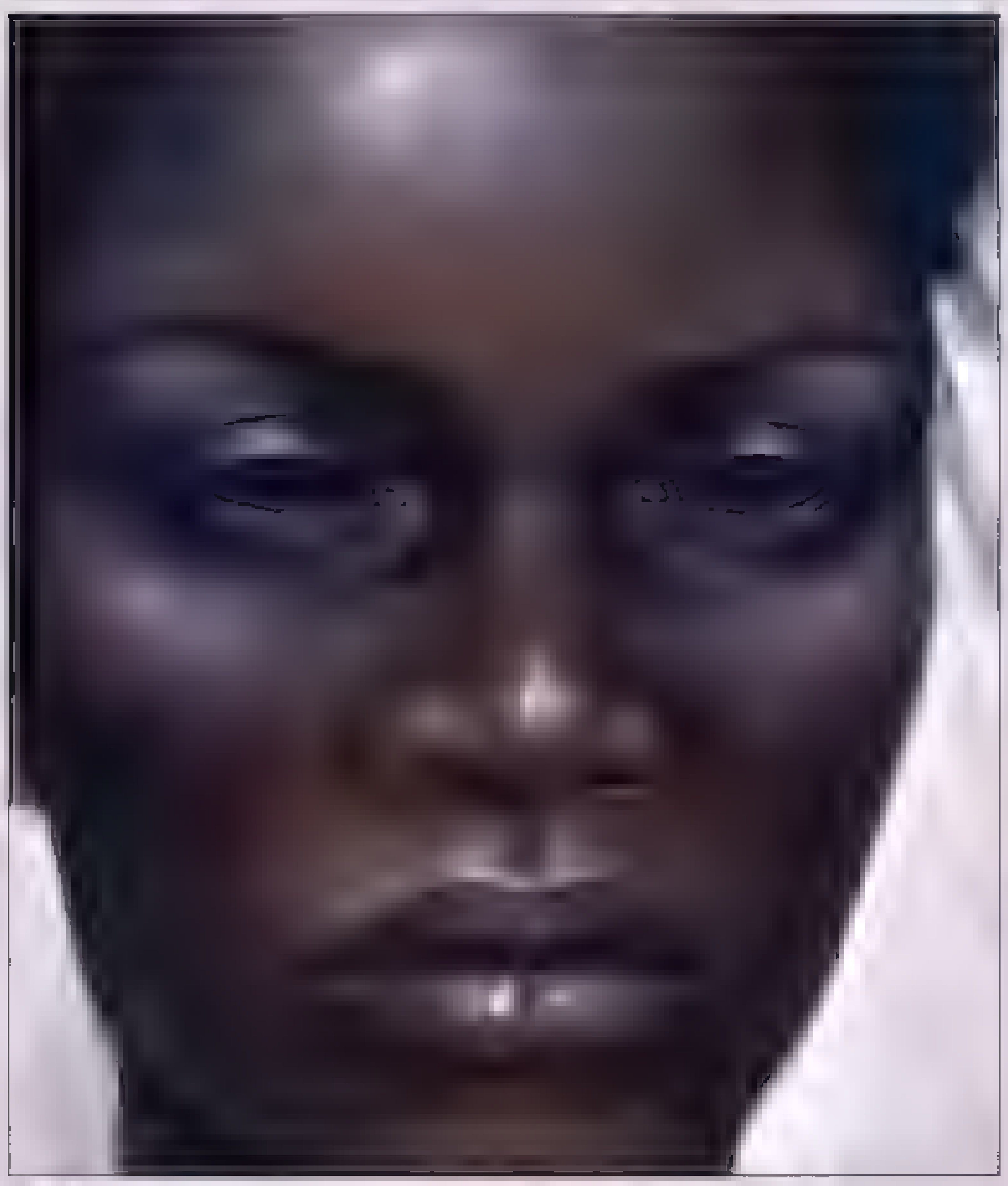
5 Refine the structure of the facial features

I notice that some of her features aren't quite right, because they're a little bit lopsided. Try horizontally flipping your canvas at regular intervals to check for symmetry – it's a great way to look at your image with fresh eyes and so gain greater objectivity. To make minor changes to aspects of the image at this point I use the Lasso tool and Edit>Transform. This enables me to scale, rotate and warp the eyes and nose without a lot of repainting. I keep the Lasso set to Feather, between 5 to 10 pixels, to prevent harsh edges as I move things around.



Blend the skin

I use a Spackled brush to create the initial blend when painting my character's skin, and to lay down additional colours as I build up the skin tone. One key element to painting realistic skin – especially dark skin where the highlights are so prominent – is to blend in pastel colours on top of the mid-tone. I use a range of colours in my palette instead of just one; here they're lavender, pink, pale grey and even a touch of yellow. This trick is best viewed in the forehead of this face.

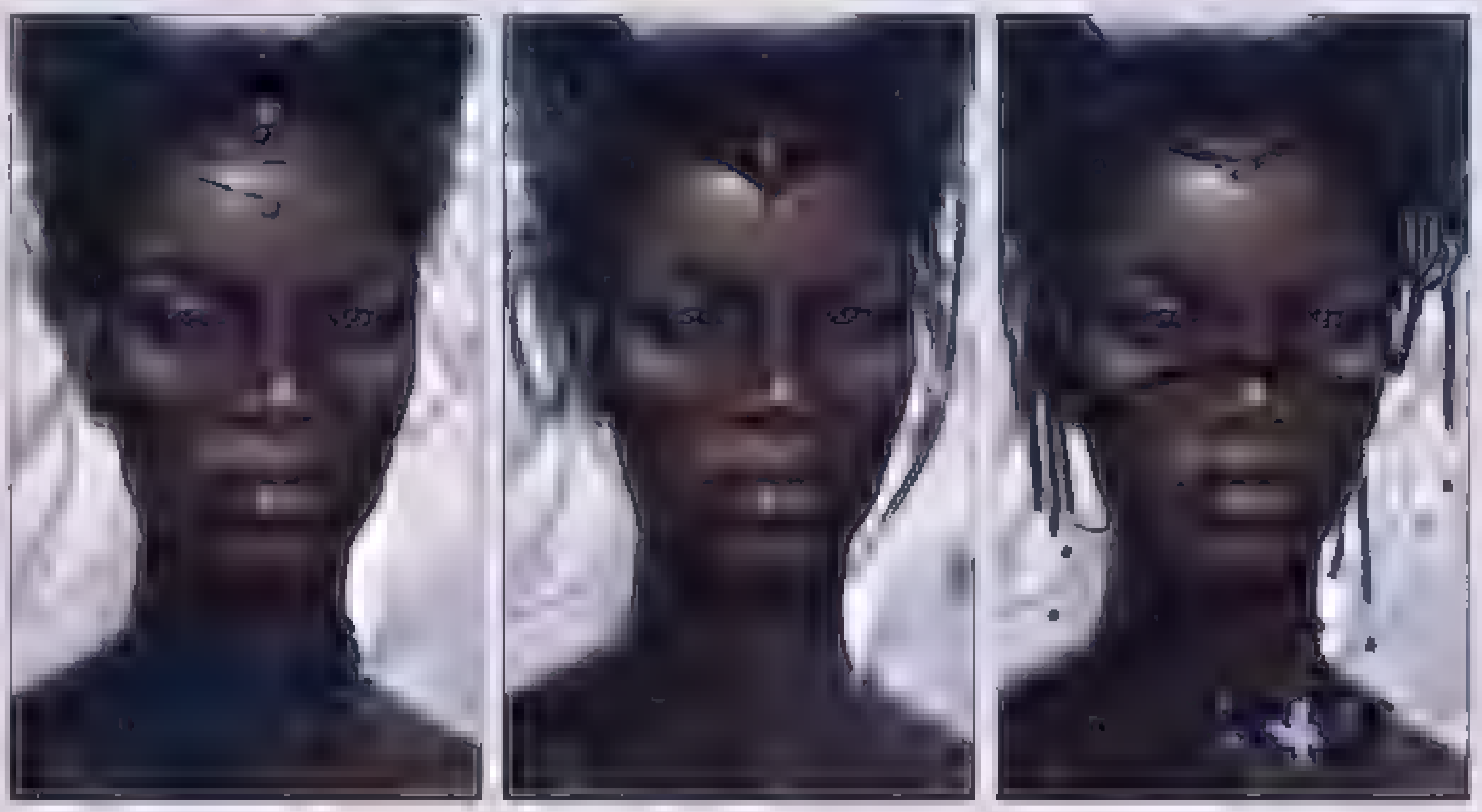


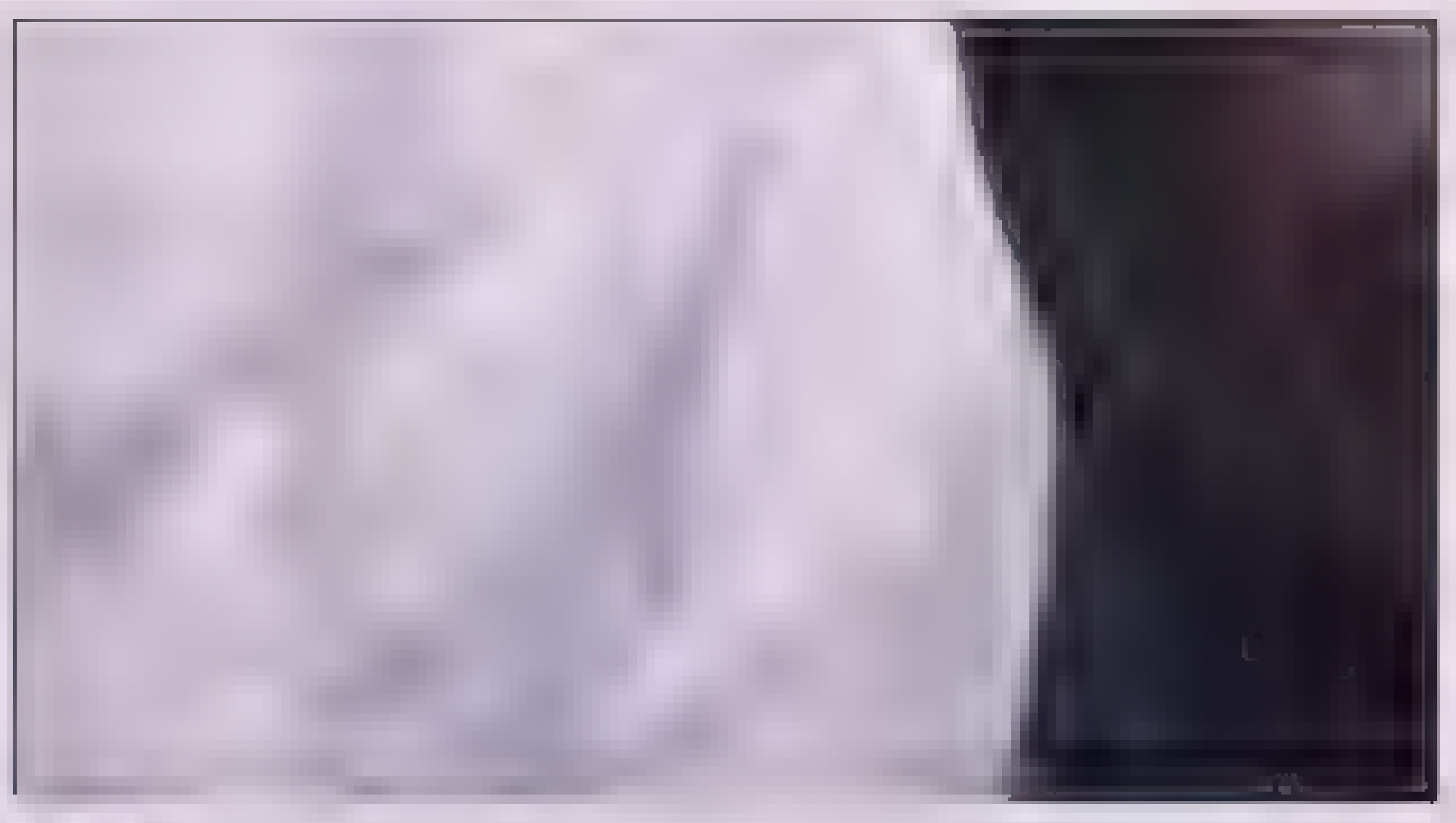
Polish facial details

Once all of my core colours are laid down, I pay attention to details such as skin texture and the shape of the eyes and lips. I import my file into Painter and refine the blending with the Oils and Oil Pastels. These tools give everything in the image a rich feel that I don't know how to achieve in Photoshop. Still, I am careful not to over-blend or over-detail – a photo-realistic finish isn't necessary to achieve realism.

Exploring costume design variations

It's time to turn on my hidden costume layer in Photoshop and start playing with design ideas. These accessories, alongside a strong and believable face, can speak volumes about a character's personality and their part in a story. I now create three distinctly different directions for the headdress and jewellery. I've developed my own tribal-influenced style of decoration over the years, and I want to integrate that heavily into this picture. I also spontaneously painted in some butterflies while coming up with costumes, and I like how they add to the image. It's important not to censor yourself during the design stage and to let your ideas flow, because of the potential that these happy inspirations offer.





Complementary background

While the background isn't a focus, it does need to complement the portrait. Here, I've kept it very pale, using my highlight tones of pink and blue as accents while the white background brings out the skin colours. I paint in freeform lines to create an abstract movement, and use custom texture brushes on top. Then I hand paint with my Goldilocks brush to integrate the texture into the background.

Finalise the designs

Background finished, I move back to the costumes. I choose the third option as a base, which is closest to my first sketch, but combine elements from the other two designs. This stage is often more about thinking than painting – all the costume elements should contribute to the image, just like the background design. Bright stars will go on top of all the dark areas, so I need to keep things minimal.

PRO SECRETS

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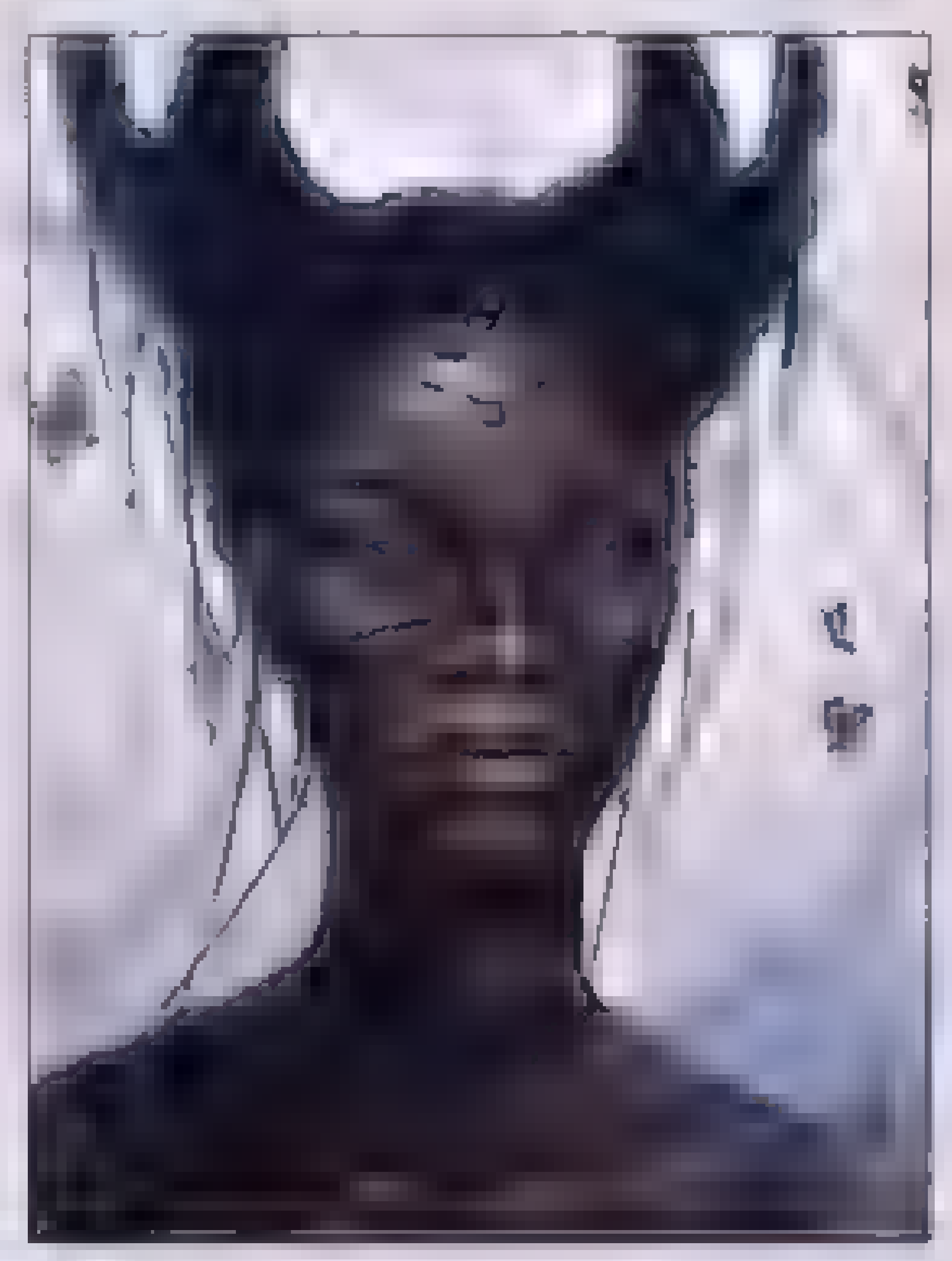


Costume detailing

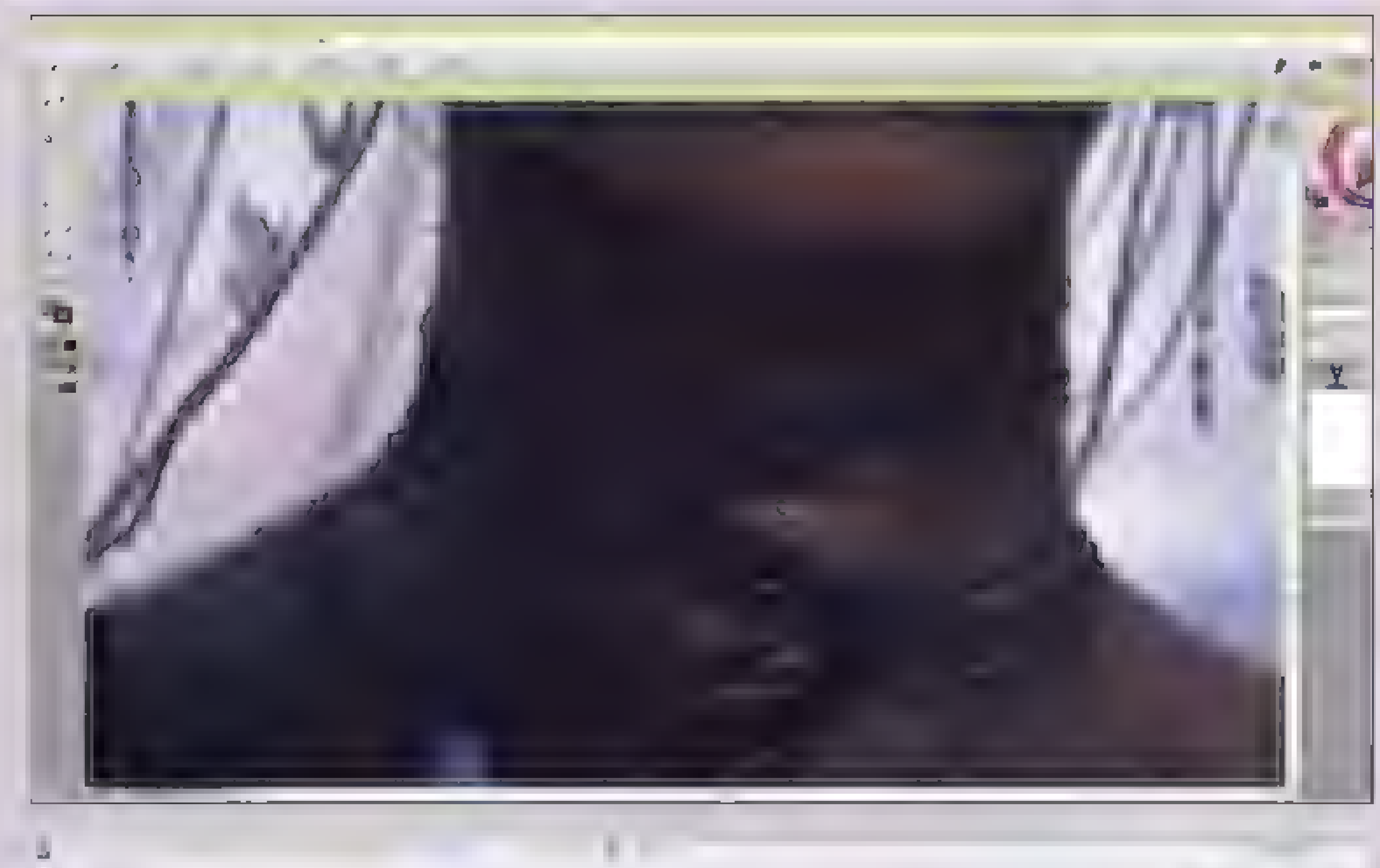
I take the image back into Painter and use the Oil Pastels to begin detailing the costume elements. These brushes are great for painting cords and straps. I want the cords to have a definite texture to them, without being distracting or too harsh. I paint in dark strands as the base, then add in short, light strokes that define twisted material running through the strands. The result is a simple woven effect. At this stage, keep in mind that implying detail can go a long way.

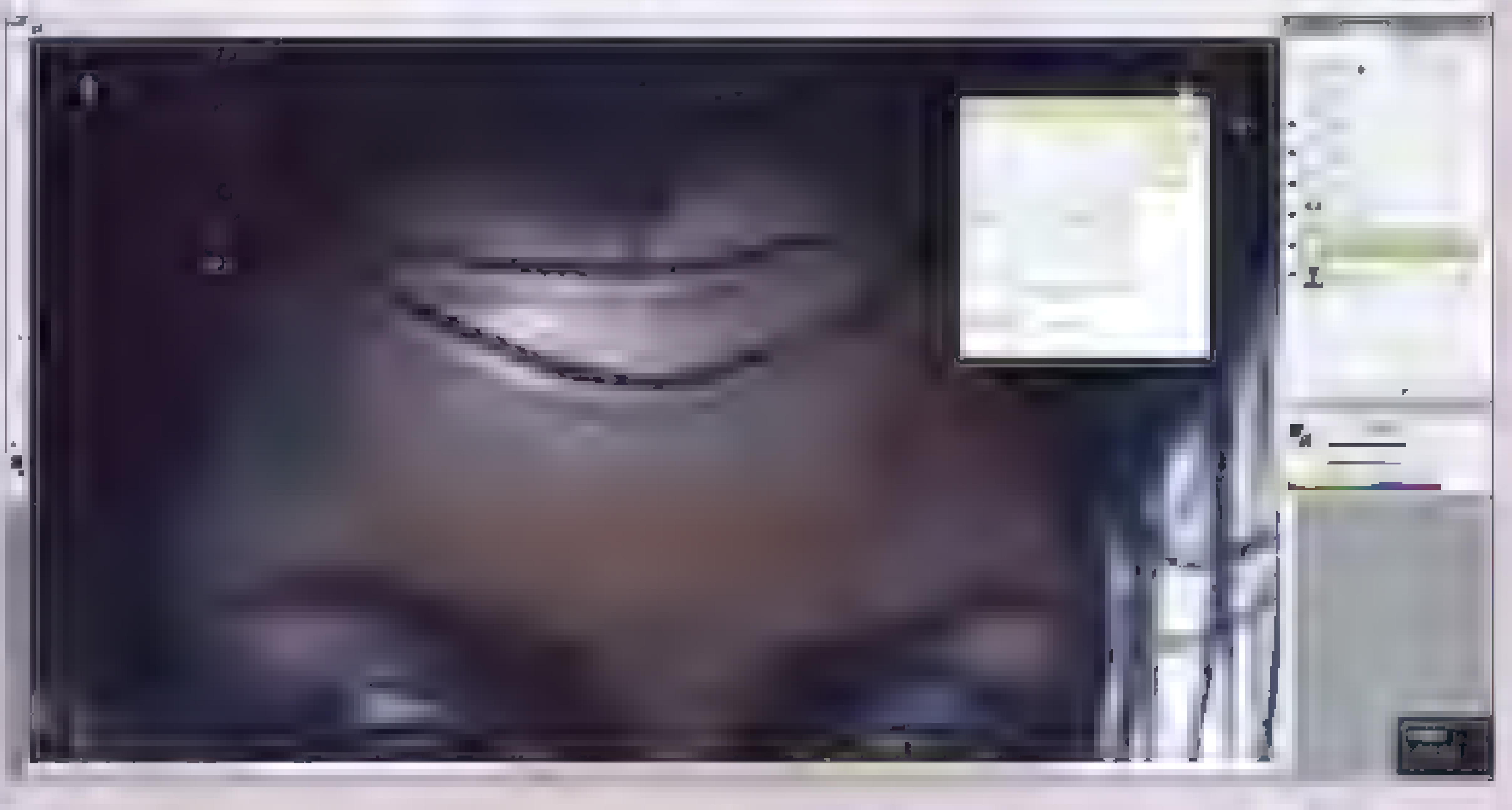
Cast shadows

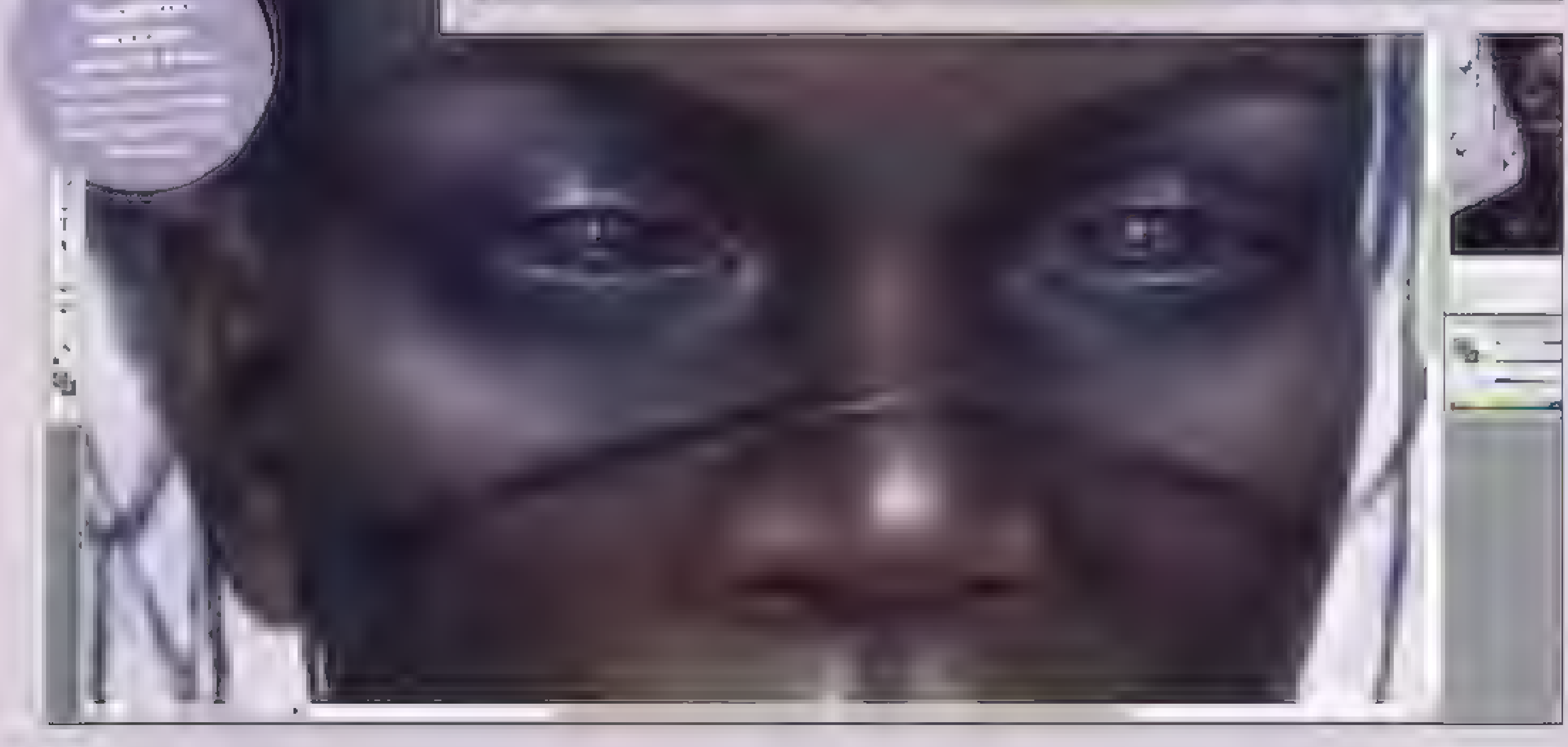
Remember that whatever you design on top of or around your portrait subject will impact the rest of the figure in some way. In this case, her headdress and necklace should be casting shadows onto her skin. I copy the costume layer, lower the contrast and darken it, then run it through a Gaussian Blur filter in Photoshop. I place this new shadow layer under the original, reduce its opacity and move it down the image slightly for an instant shadow effect.

Finishing features

Once the costuming is all in place, I take a moment to give her skin a once-over, just to make sure that everything still looks right. Using my Goldilocks brush, I repaint her eyelids slightly, balance out her lips and paint in subtle irises and pupils, along with a pair of eyelashes in a lighter colour so they stand out from her skin. I also add gentle hatching and pores to the skin.

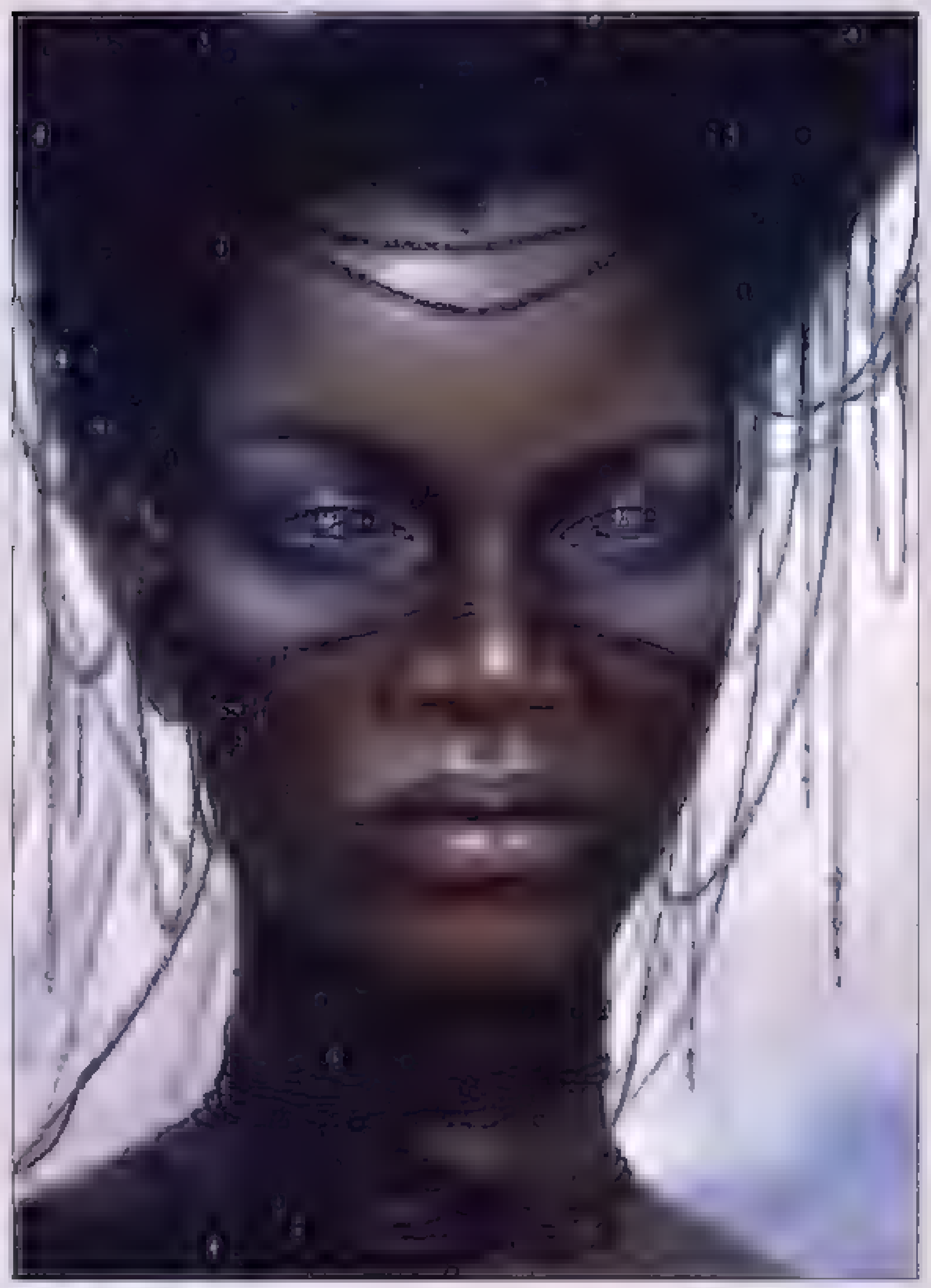


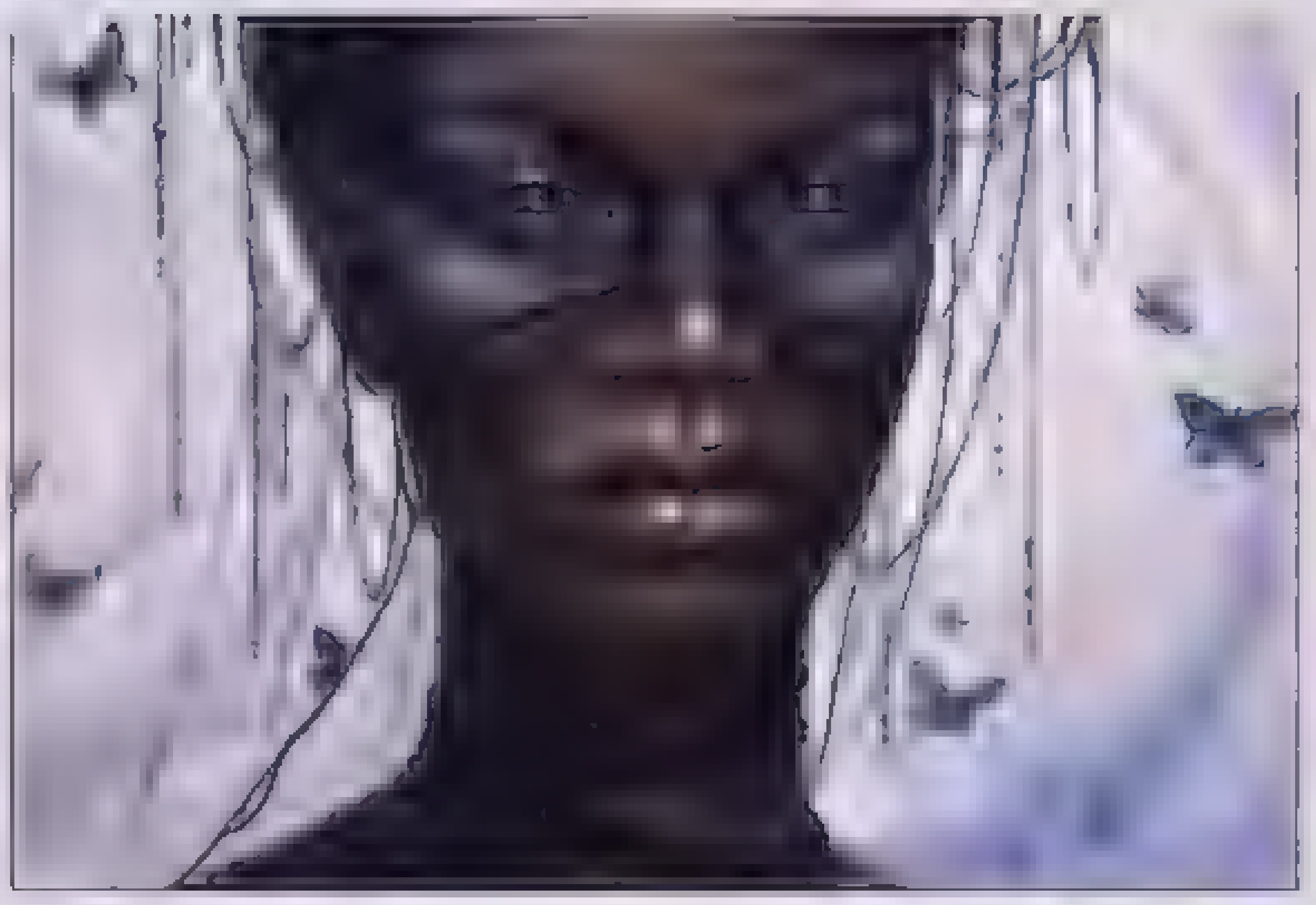


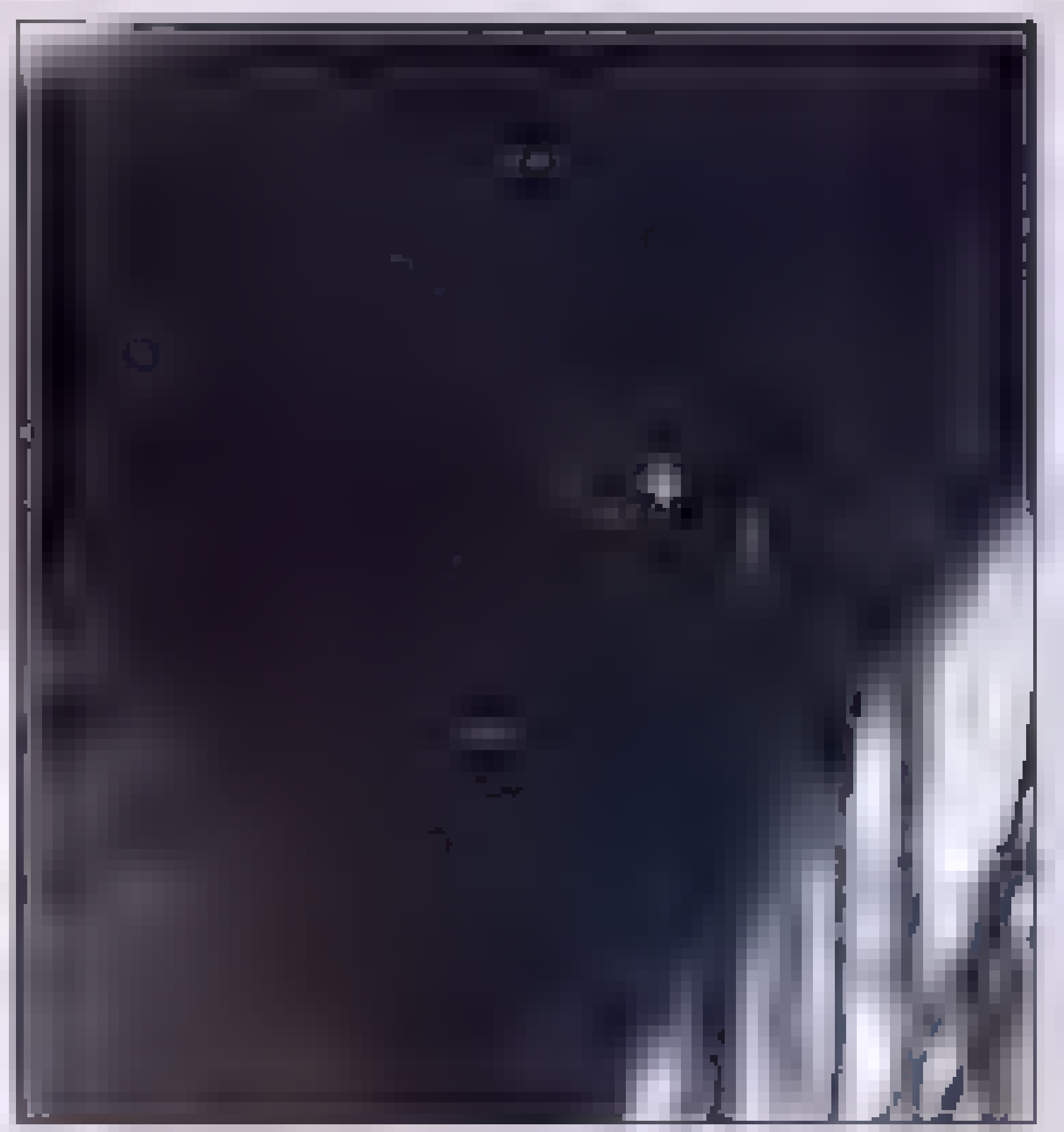


14 Add in a star field

I have a preliminary version of the stars that I want to add into my portrait saved on a separate layer, and it's almost time to integrate them on top of the rest of the image. First I finish up the hair area, keeping it deliberately simple and flat in colour and texture but retaining the striking and fantastical shape from my initial sketches. Hopefully I'll achieve the look of a starry night sky in this area, so I don't want any tight rendering or fussy details to get in my way. Sometimes abstraction and unusually flat areas can actually add to an image such as this.

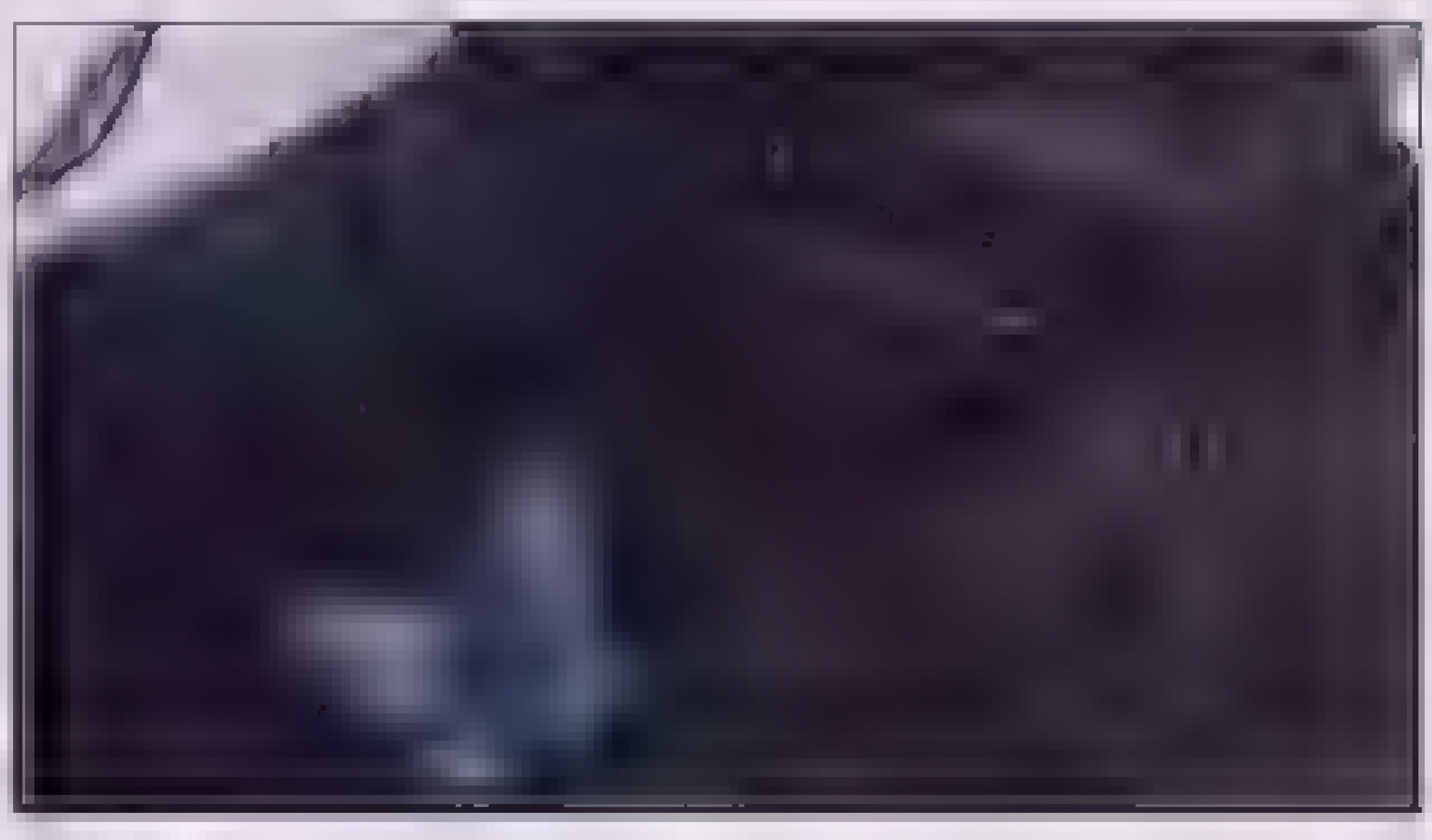






15 Detailing the stars

The trickiest thing about stars is deciding on their placement, balancing their size and brightness – it's like a whole separate composition in itself. I have to be extra careful in the facial area so that I don't overpower the skin. To paint the stars I take a soft-edged round brush with medium opacity, and make a white dot. Then with a bigger brush on a layer below the main star layer, I paint in bright, saturated colour to act as a halo effect.



16 Perfect scattering

I zoom out often and use the Lasso tool and Copy/Paste function to help speed up the star painting process. I rotate, combine and erase parts of each section I copy to keep the star patterns from looking repetitive. When zoomed out I carefully erase any areas where the stars appear heavy-handed. By keeping the brightness, size, spacing and halo colour varied, I create a sense of depth – as if looking at outer space – and scatter them realistically across the shadow areas.

17 Getting butterflies

I'd sketched in some butterflies during the costume design, and the last thing I do is finish those up. Overall, the majority of my time has been spent on detailing and refining an idea. I got all of the hard stuff out of the way at the beginning, which allowed me to explore the fun aspects of portrait painting. I'm really pleased with my result! All I wanted was an excuse to paint deep skin tones, and I ended up with a mysterious and evocative facial image.

PRO SECRETS

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

Photoshop

PAINT A LUSH FANTASY FOREST

Jorge Jacinto reveals how to create an epic-scale arboreal scene that pulls the viewer right into the larger-than-life setting

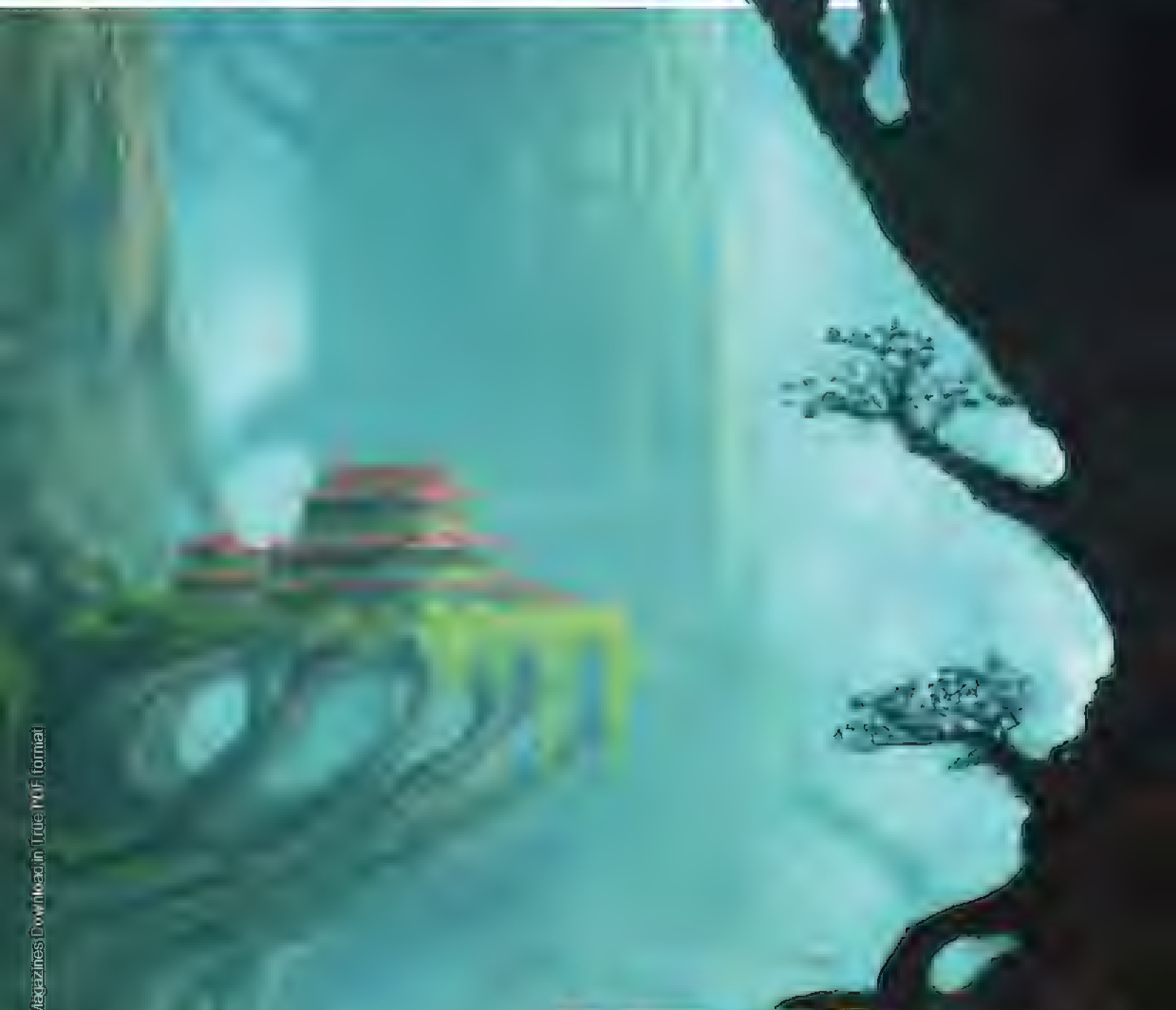
Artist PROFILE

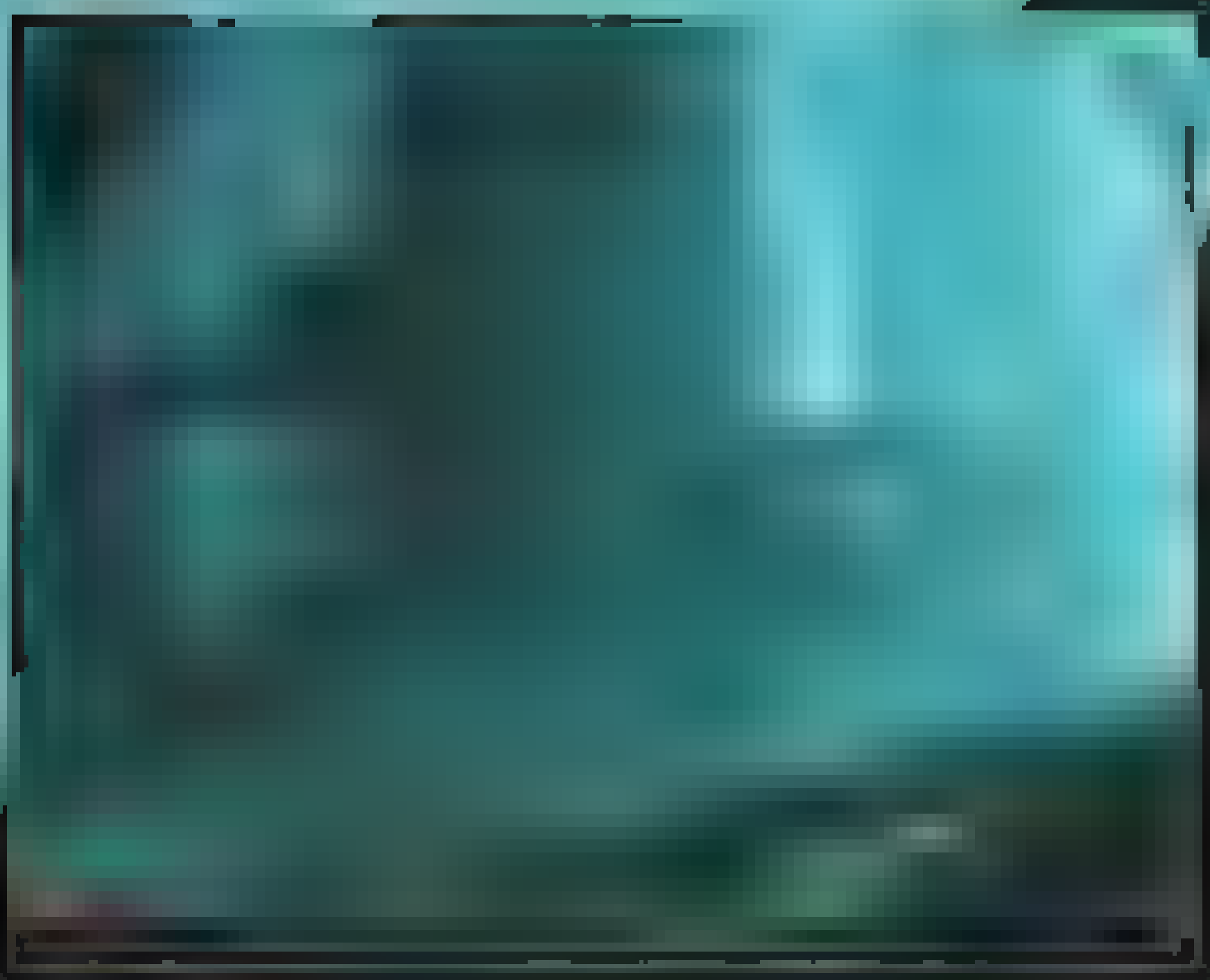
[illegible]

The two things I look forward to the most in a painting of a landscape are its sense of scale and the mood that it conveys. I always try to make both of these factors central to my pieces. When painting a fantasy landscape I'm keen to give the viewer a sense of discovery, as if they're explorers uncovering a new and fantastic place.

When I was asked to do a workshop on how to paint a fantasy forest I immediately imagined these giant trees, so big that houses could be built in them, with a hazy light coming through the great leaves illuminating the grassy fields below. Basically, I pictured a forest that I would love to be able to visit. Once you're able to clearly imagine this picture in your mind, along with its mood and feeling, you're ready to start painting it. I believe that this stage is very important, because if you have a clear idea of what kind of feeling you want an imaginary land to have, then every step in your painting process will be spent trying to achieve it, giving your work extra focus.

Bear in mind that these steps aren't in a specific painting order. They're simply a list of stages that I always go through when painting this type of artwork. I hope you enjoy it!





Thumbnailing

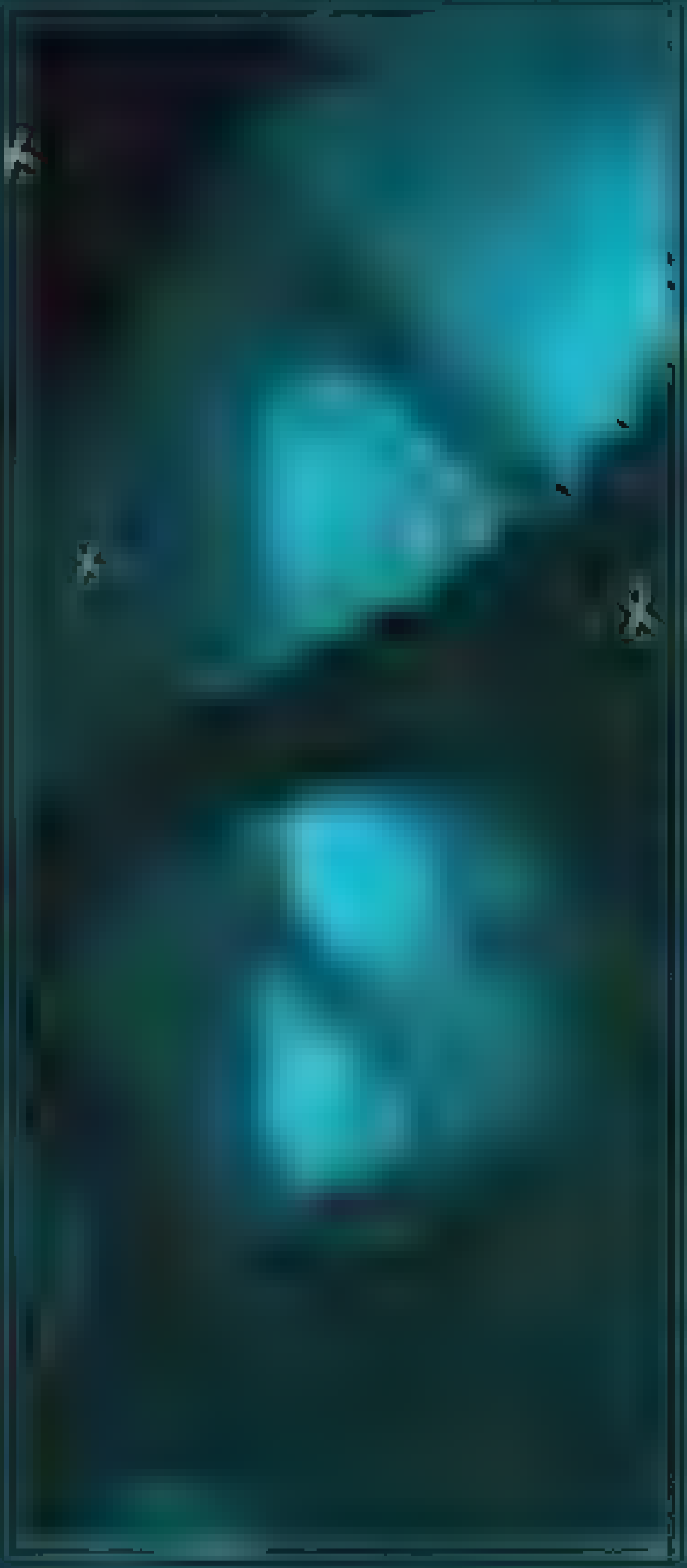
Once I have a clear idea of what I want to paint in my mind, I like to start with a thumbnail. This is a quick and blocky paint on a low-resolution canvas. I don't focus on details at this point, only on the general composition. I establish the general shapes, the light sources, the depth and the general colours of the image. I treat the thumbnail as the backbone of my painting.

Colour considerations

When painting a fantasy forest the colours you choose are crucial to the kind of mood you're trying to convey. I opt for greens and cyan blues: the greens inject life into the forest, while the blues give it a serene and magical look. Were I to paint something darker I wouldn't use any of these, probably choosing dark browns and greys instead. I also mix some light browns with the greens, to give the scene more variation.

Placing light and values

One of the most important factors in any painting of a forest environment is the way you alter the light and values, because this will directly influence how the shapes (of the trees and roots in this case) will be perceived. Here I ensure that the light values are placed in spots where the shapes will overlap them. This makes them much more defined and generates a greater sense of depth.

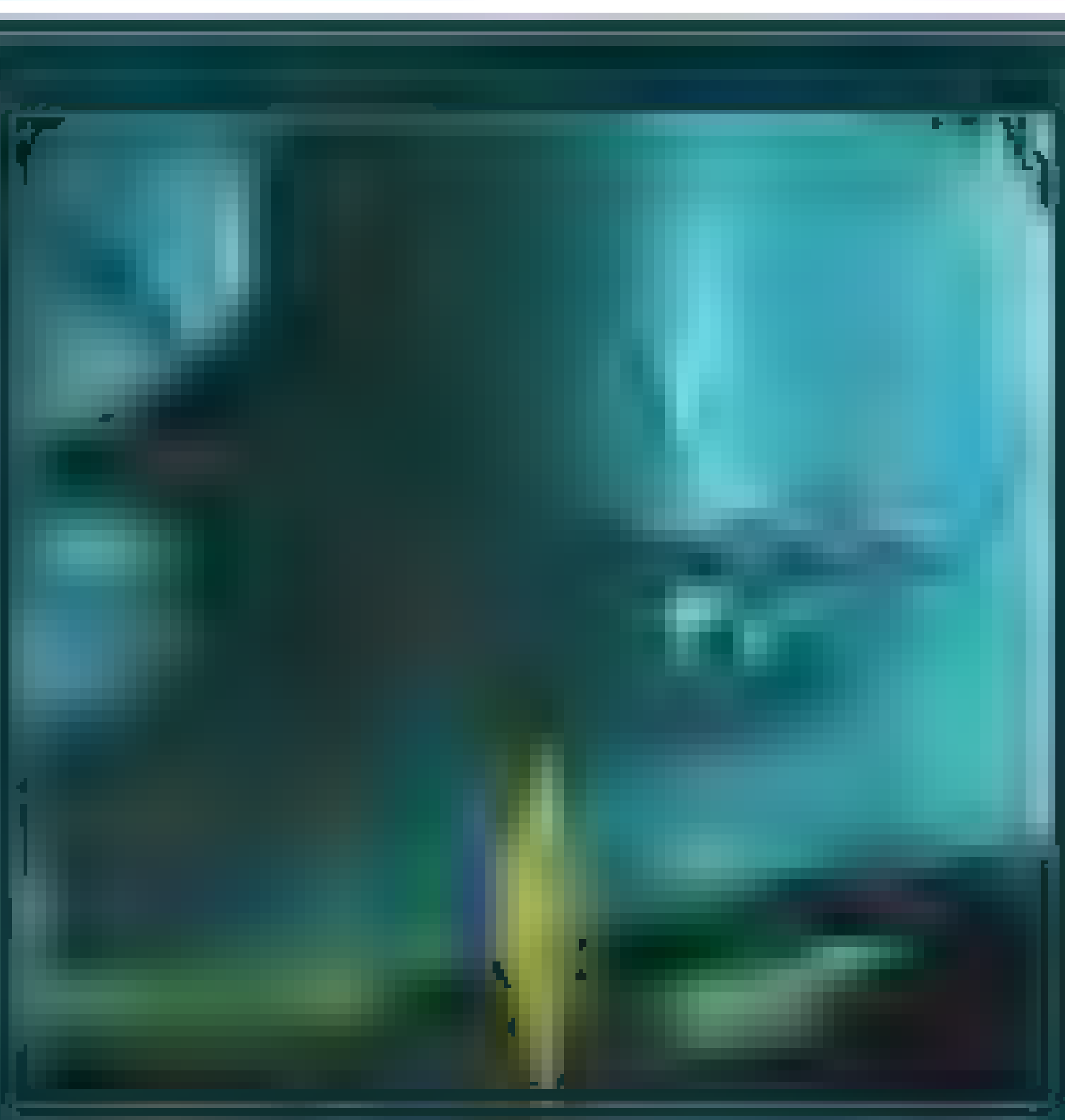


PRO SECRETS

[illegible]

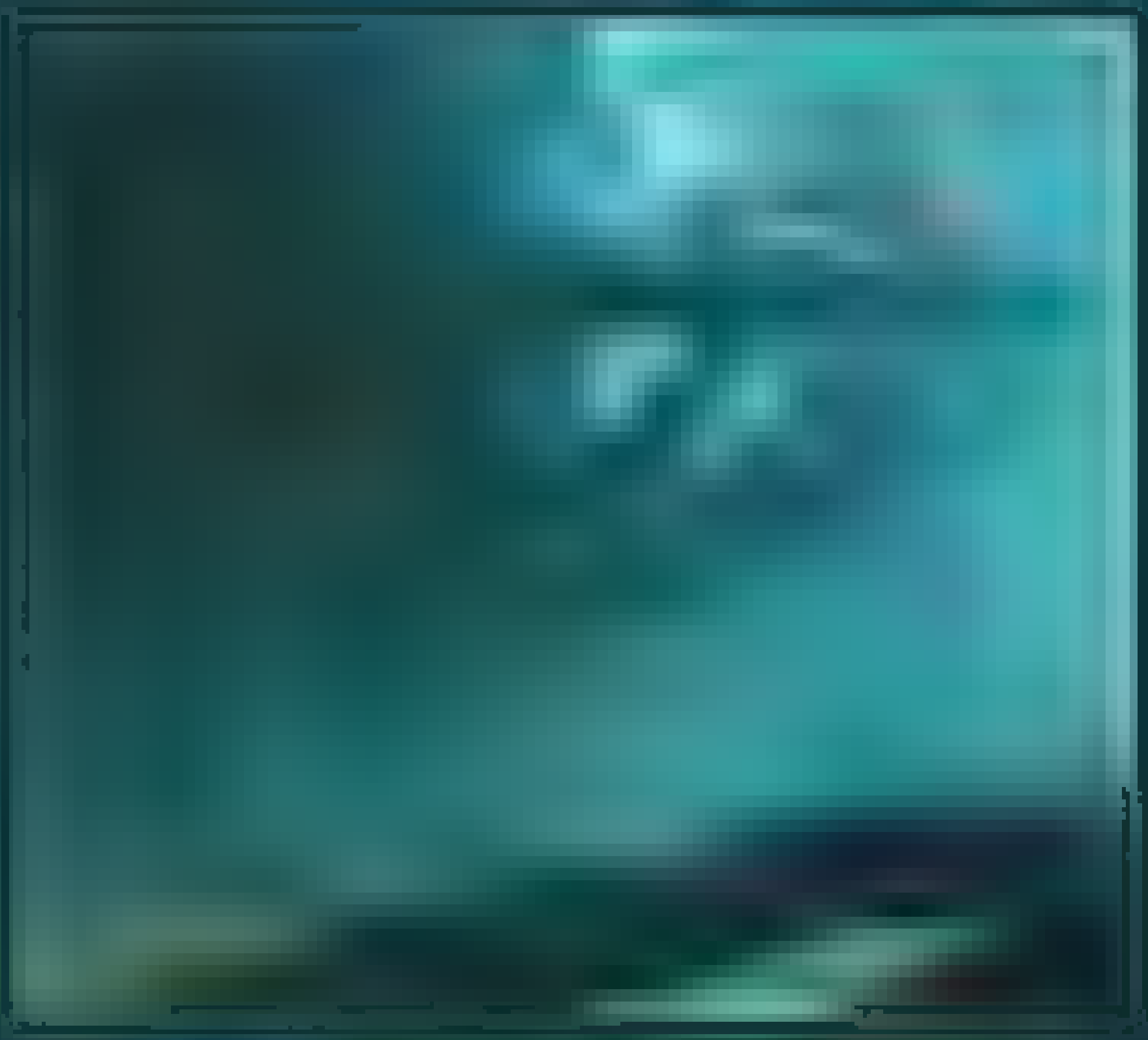
Choice of perspective

Perspective will dictate how the viewer will perceive the scenery. I choose a fairly standard overhead view because I want to show the expansiveness of the woodland scene. I also like to use a first-person perspective on some forest paintings, placing the "camera" right in the middle of the scene as if we're seeing everything through the eyes of someone who's actually there. The result is an immersive viewing experience because there's a greater sense of scale.



Generate scale

Scale might be the hardest thing to convey in a simple thumbnail, because much of the sense of scale comes from the details in a painting. In this thumbnail I paint what appears to be some kind of buildings on a platform extending from the middle tree, which means that the tree can only be very, very big. Anything that the viewer can compare in size in a piece can help you achieve the sense of scale you're after.

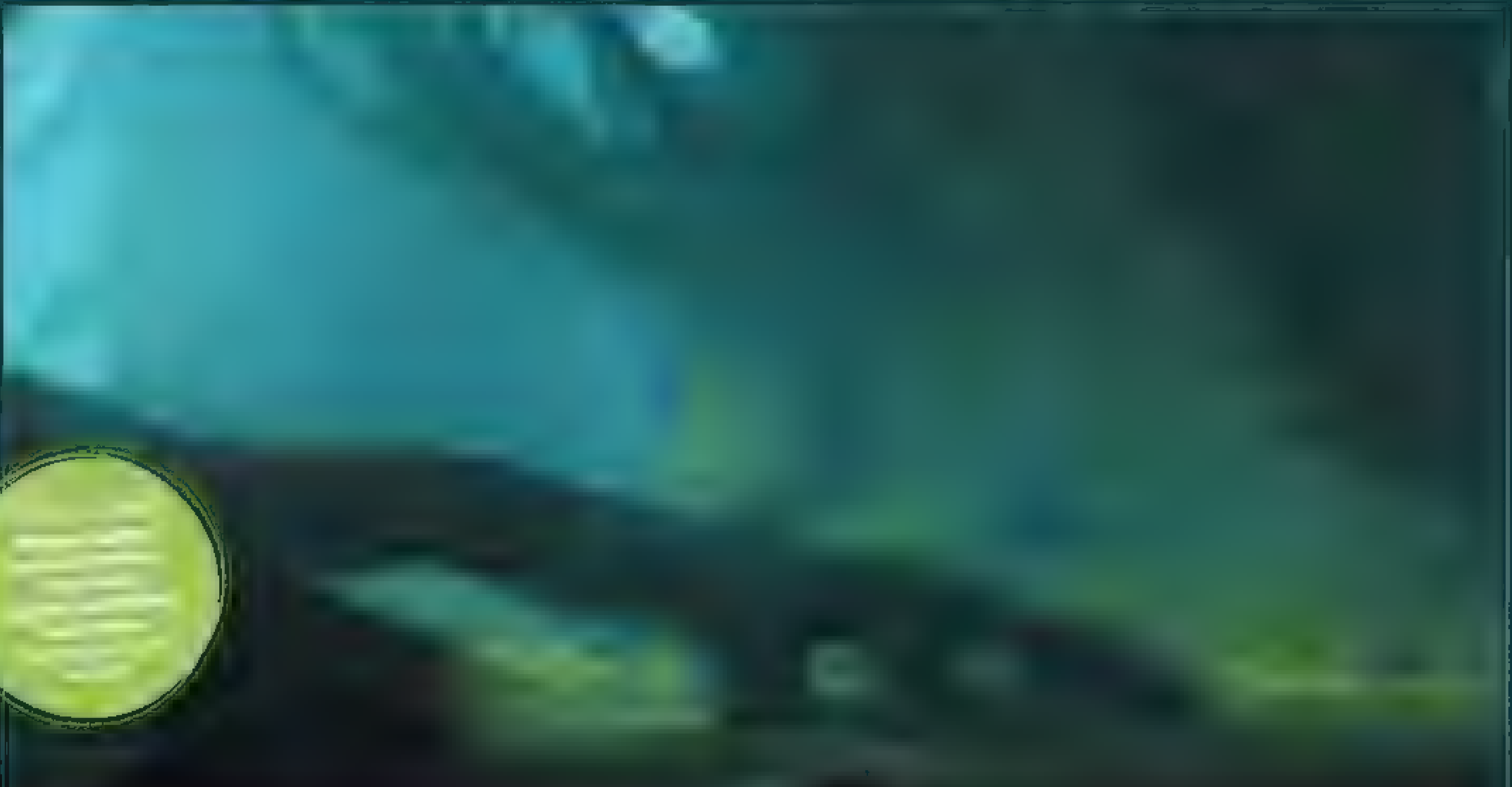


Depth techniques

Depth can be achieved in a number of ways, and here I use light/shadow values to get the job done. I usually create some sort of haze effect in my pieces, meaning that the further away from the camera the objects in the scene are, the more they fade into this fog, which is the same colour as the overall light in the piece. This not only creates a blending effect, it also makes objects further away contain fewer details.

Uncover imbalances in the composition

After the thumbnail is complete, I copy it to my high-resolution canvas and then stretch it to fit the whole document. I now begin refining everything, starting with the general shapes and the light/shadow values. At this point I flip the canvas horizontally to make sure I have a balanced composition and that the image is reading well. More often than not, you'll find mistakes at this stage.



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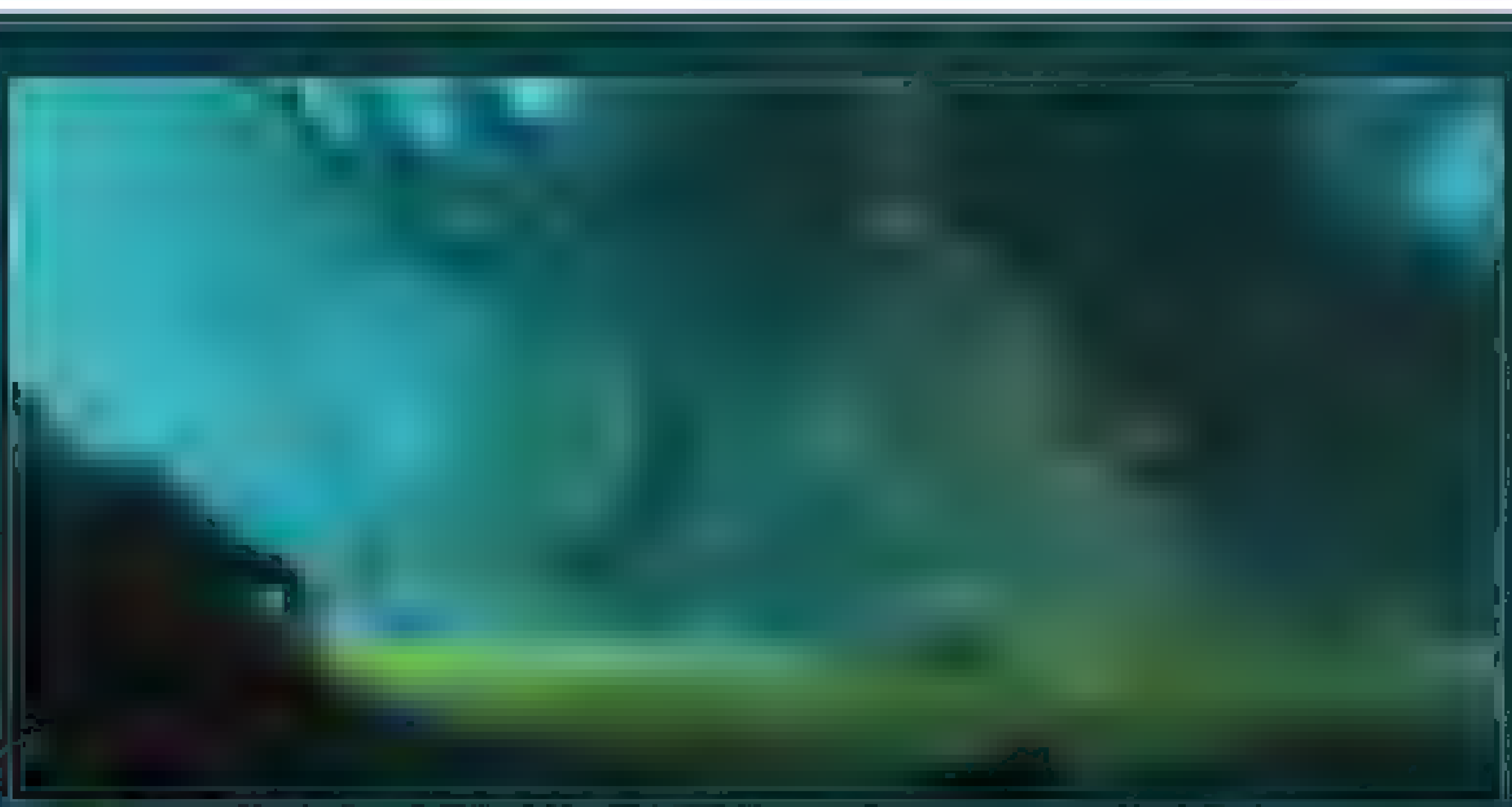
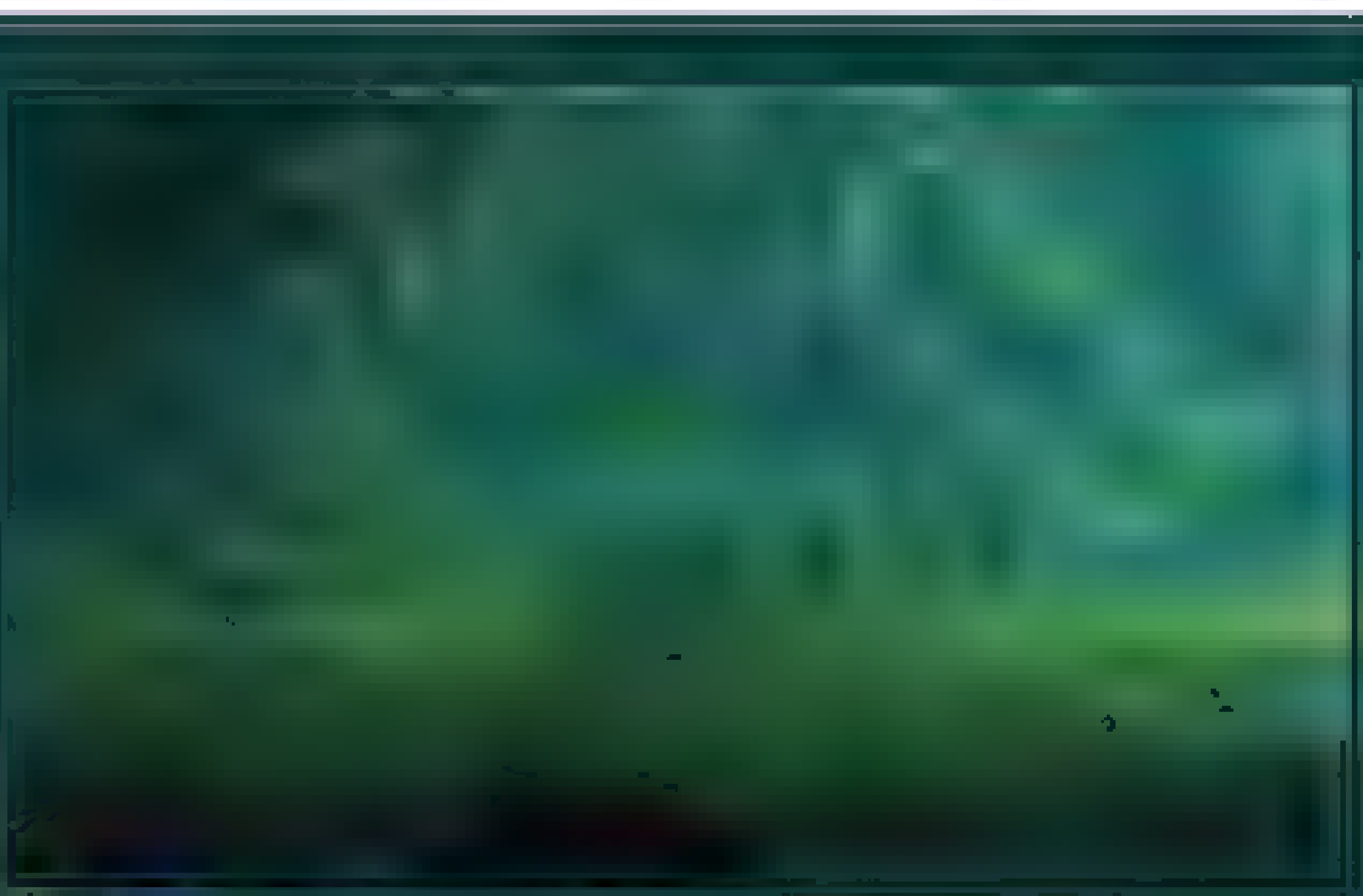




Fixing composition errors

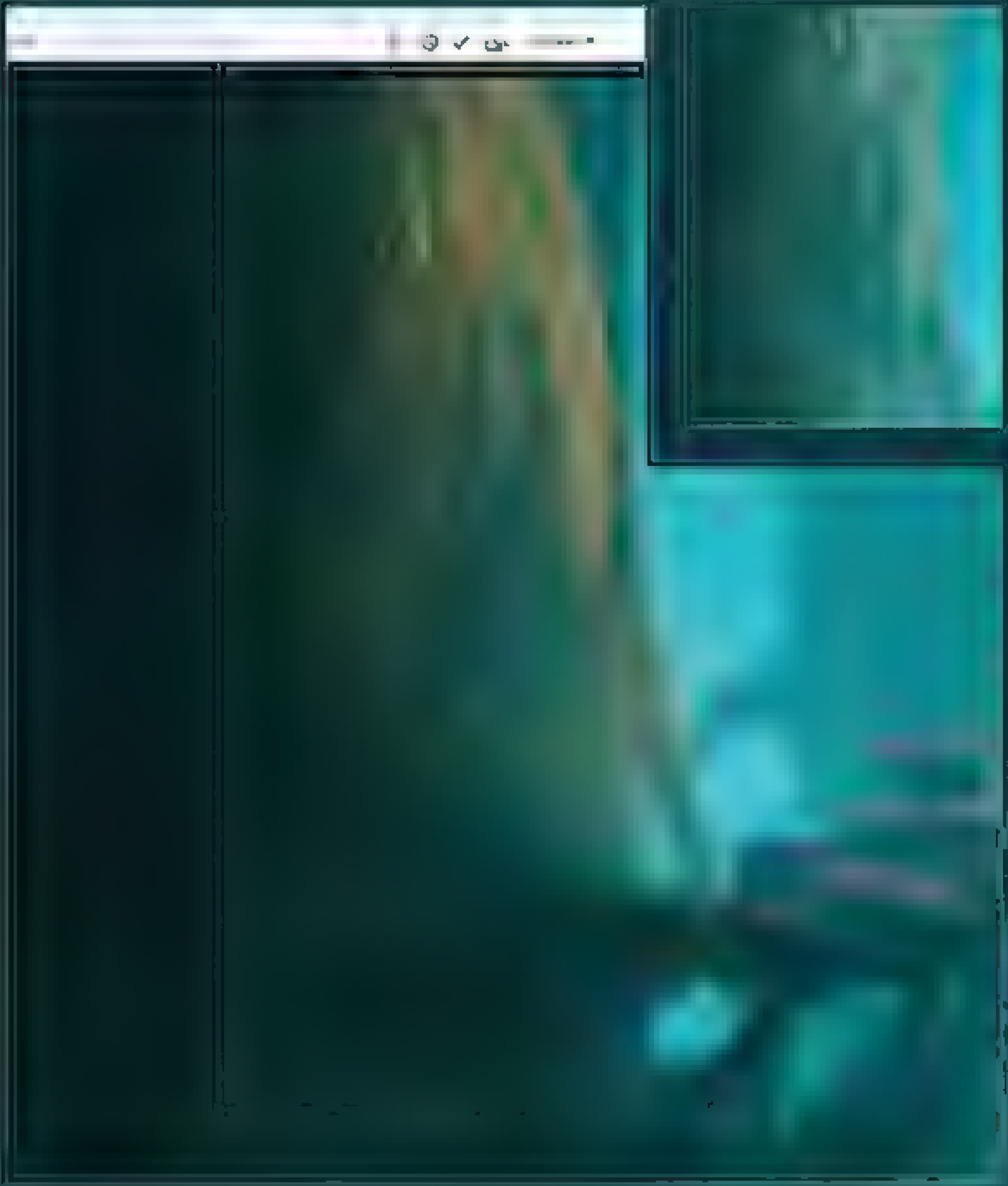
After flipping the canvas you'll almost certainly find that something's not right in the composition. In this case the big root extending from the foreground tree is something I think I should remove because it's taking up too much space in the middle ground. Noticing these sorts of composition errors is important, and the sooner you find them and fix them the better: they can be harder to fix once the painting becomes more detailed.

Adding texture to the giant trees

Now that I'm happier with the composition it's time to start adding some details. I use Photoshop's Stamp brush with a rock texture on top of the tree, transform it to fit and then reduce the opacity so that it blends with the values beneath it. This method not only enables you to add a fast texture to the tree, you can also use it to add some colour variation to the objects where you use it.

10 Blend and reapply the tree texture

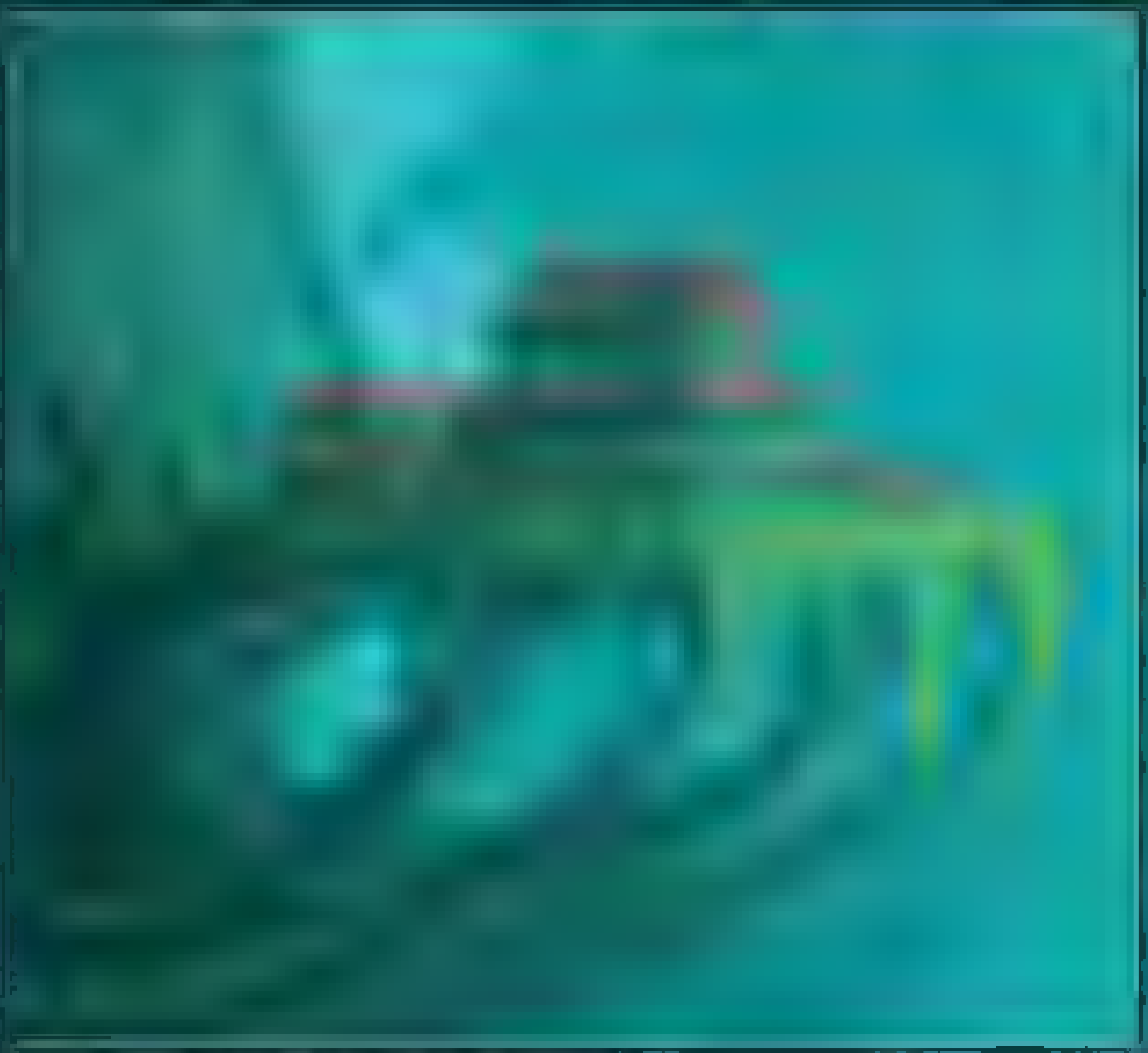
After the texture is blended in I paint over it, changing the detail as I go along. I also make a copy of the layer with the texture and place it on other parts of the tree, once again transforming it to fit the shape. After this the scale of the tree is more noticeable because it has more detail. I also only use the texture on one side of the trees, to make the direction of the light more obvious.



Painting more details, creating more scale

After getting rid of the root in the middle I now have more space to add some details on the grassy field. To do this I use the Photoshop Lasso tool to make the shape of some rocks on the fly. This tool is great for this kind of detailing because it'll quickly generate a very sharp shape. I then just need to fill it with the right colour. At this point I keep adding details to the trees and ground using the Lasso tool, adding more texture and increasing the overall refinement of the painting.

PRO SECRETS



Colouring the temple

I decide that the structure on the tree is an abandoned temple. I paint the roof in red tones, which contrast nicely with the green and blue hues of the forest. I also paint some overgrown ivy and grass on the structure, to make it seem even older and almost a part of the tree itself. Little details like this can be used to give mystery and a back story to the piece.

Keep colour balancing

Every now and then I like to merge all my layers and just bring up Photoshop's Color Balance tool to tweak the colour of the piece. This method is not only a great way to change the overall colour scheme of your image, it can also help you to reinforce your colour choices. This is because the tool balances the colour of the whole image, and not just individual layers or objects.

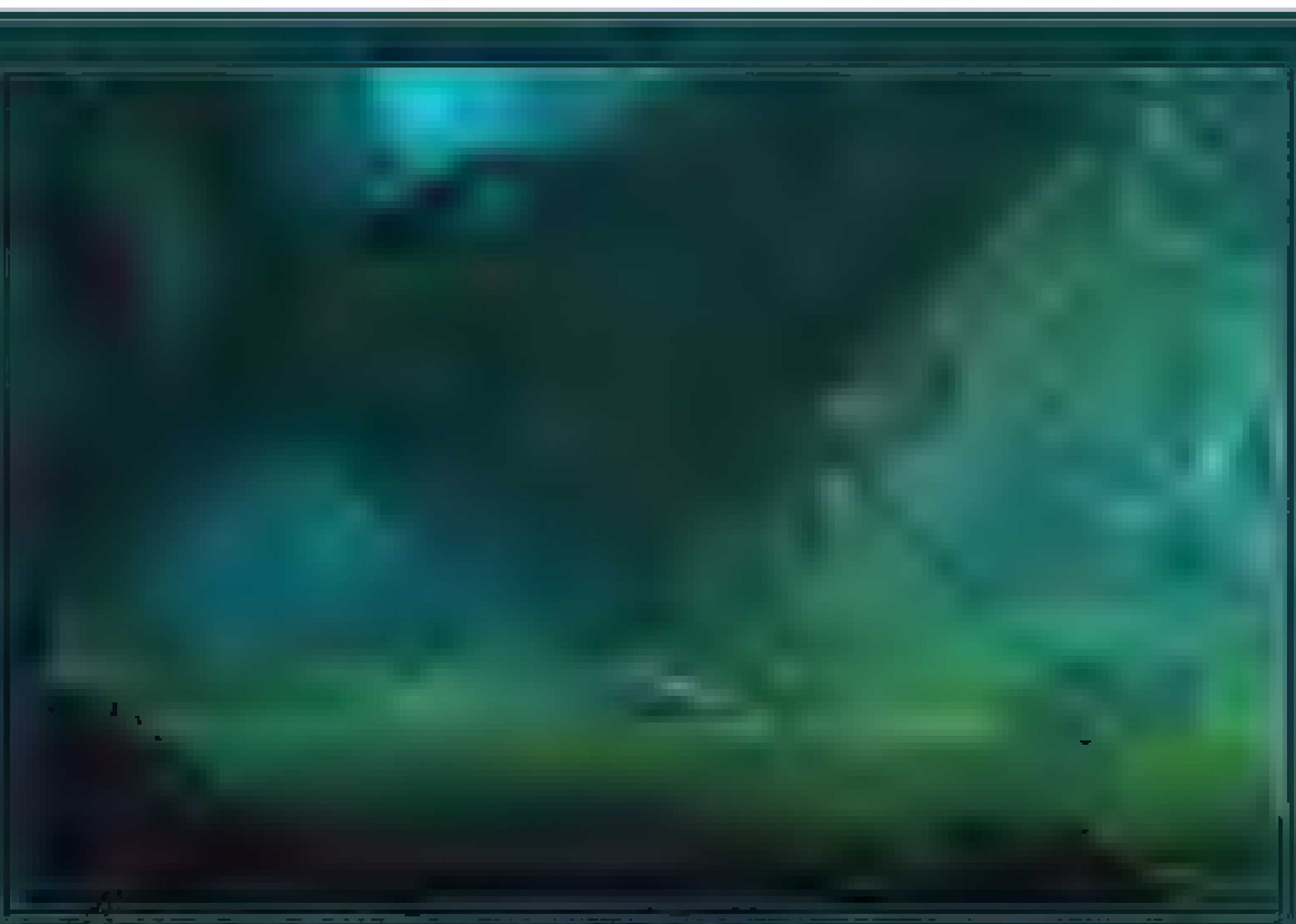
14 Keep on 'levelling'

After carrying out my overall colour adjustments of the image I also like to play around with Photoshop's Levels and Curves tools. Both of these functions help me carry out some adjustments to the light and shadow values of the painting. This ensures that the composition remains balanced, rather than containing overly dark or light values. This is because too much contrast usually kills a lot of the detail.

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

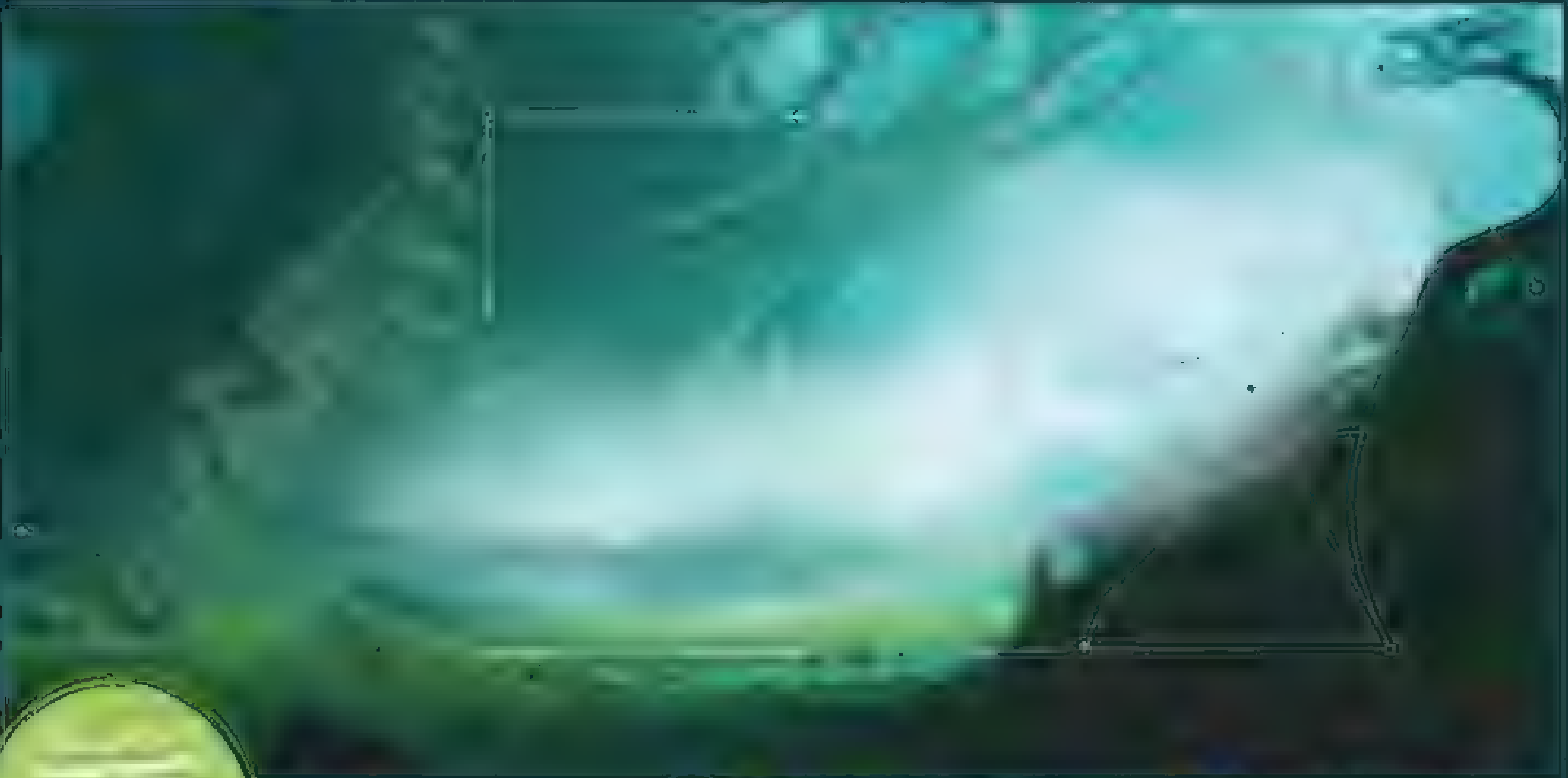
Create subtle ambience

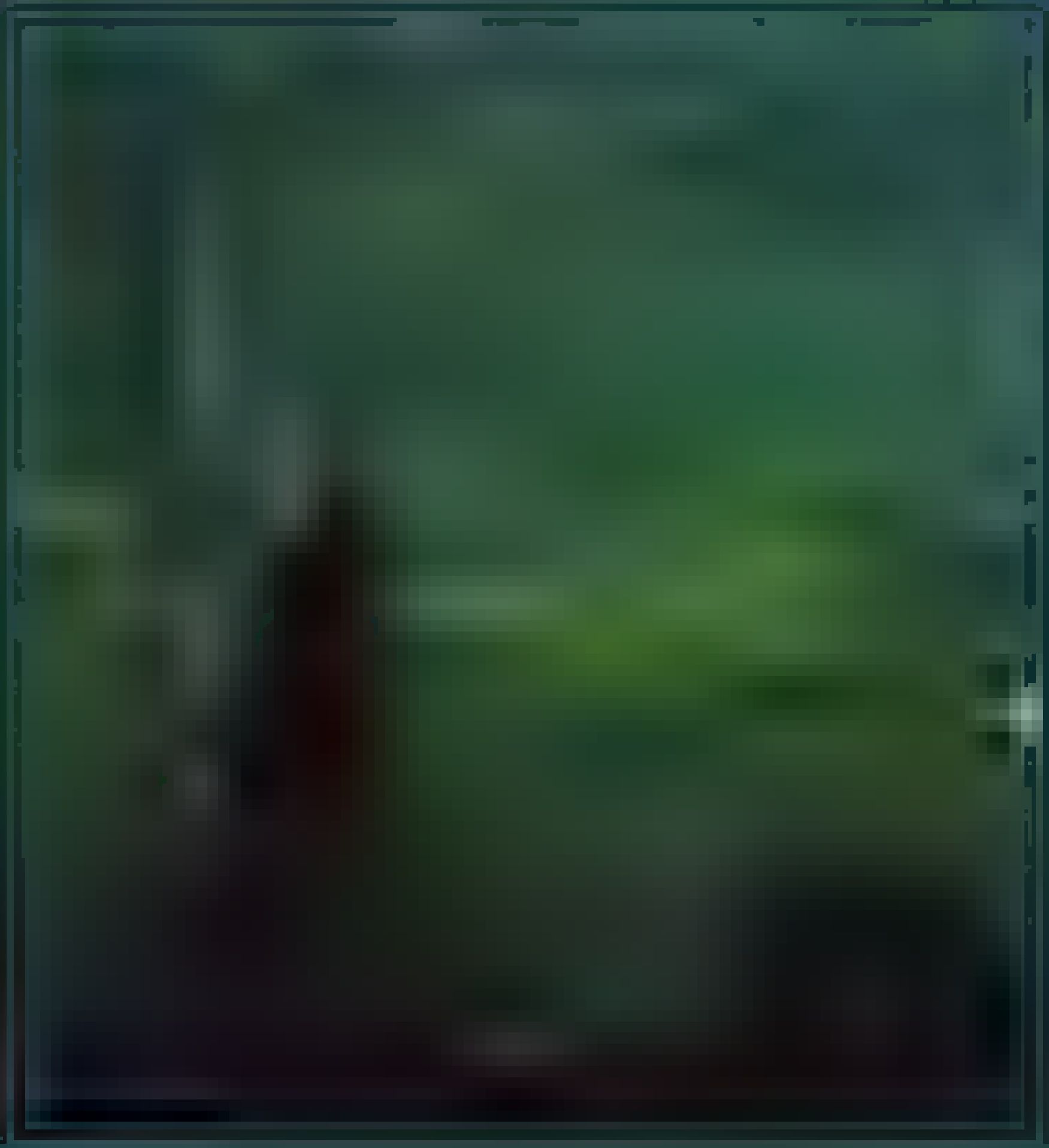
I feel that my artworks always benefit from atmospheric effects, such as fog and volumetric lighting. To generate the fog I usually just paint it with a specific brush and if I see fit, I'll warp it around the piece using the Transform tool to give it some flow and movement. I paint the volumetric lighting on a layer with the blending option set to Hard Light, which makes it blend well with other light values of the environment.



Painting in foreground details

The foreground is where I usually use the darkest values of the image because this helps to give it depth and make the viewer feel like they're part of the scene. Because the foreground is so dark it doesn't require much detail, only shapes. However, I avoid filling the corners of the screen with too many foreground shapes: it's best to leave room for the composition to breathe. Using pure black is also a no-no, because this usually disturbs the image contrast.





17 Placing a small character

I believe that it's important for most fantasy and sci-fi environment artworks to have a character placed somewhere in them. A recognisable person will better inform the viewer of the scale within your image and, just like the abandoned temple placed on the moss-laden branch of the main tree, provide some kind of back story to the image. I usually place my characters in the foreground, to make it seem that they, just like the viewer, are discovering this ancient forest for the first time.

18 Adding those few final touches

In the closing stages of a painting I just keep refining until I'm happy with everything. I also check for any more composition errors and see if anything needs more detail. I'll always play around with Color Balance and Levels one last time, and usually also add small details such as particles of dust or small light points, which usually generate a fantastical mood. One last thing: just make sure the image is as close as it can be to what you first imagined, and then you can call it finished.

ImagineFX CORE SKILLS

Painter

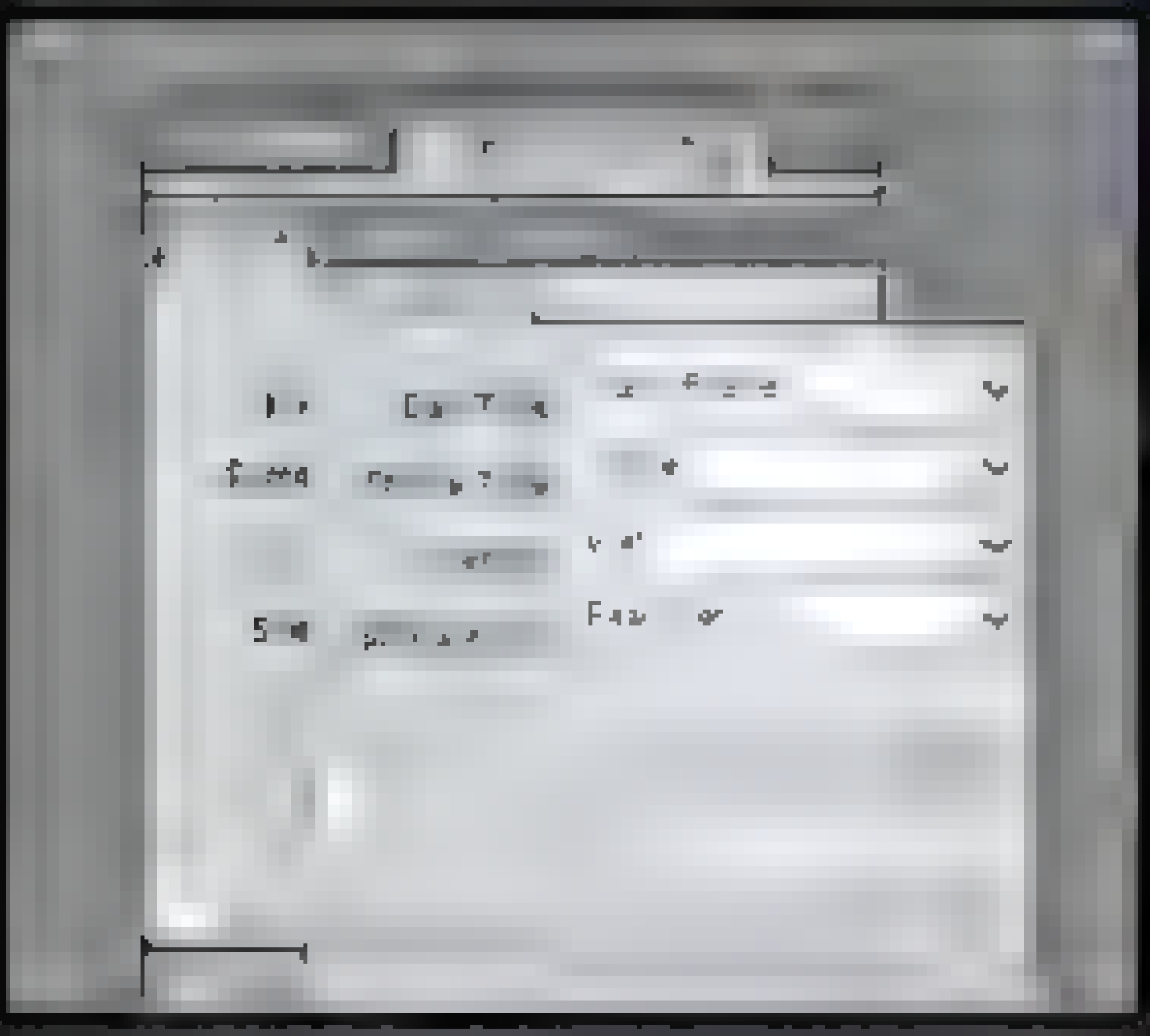
NAVIGATE THE NEW USER INTERFACE

Learn how to optimise your workflow and workspace with Painter 12's brand-new user interface. **Simon Dominic** shows you around

While painting and drawing features are fundamental to an art package, workflow and customisation are also important. Painter 12 provides a new and improved user interface that gives you more scope to configure your workspace. Familiar customisation options such as user-defined key-presses are still present (Edit>Preferences>Customize Keys), while extra features have been added, such as tabbed panels, palette based commands and custom icons.

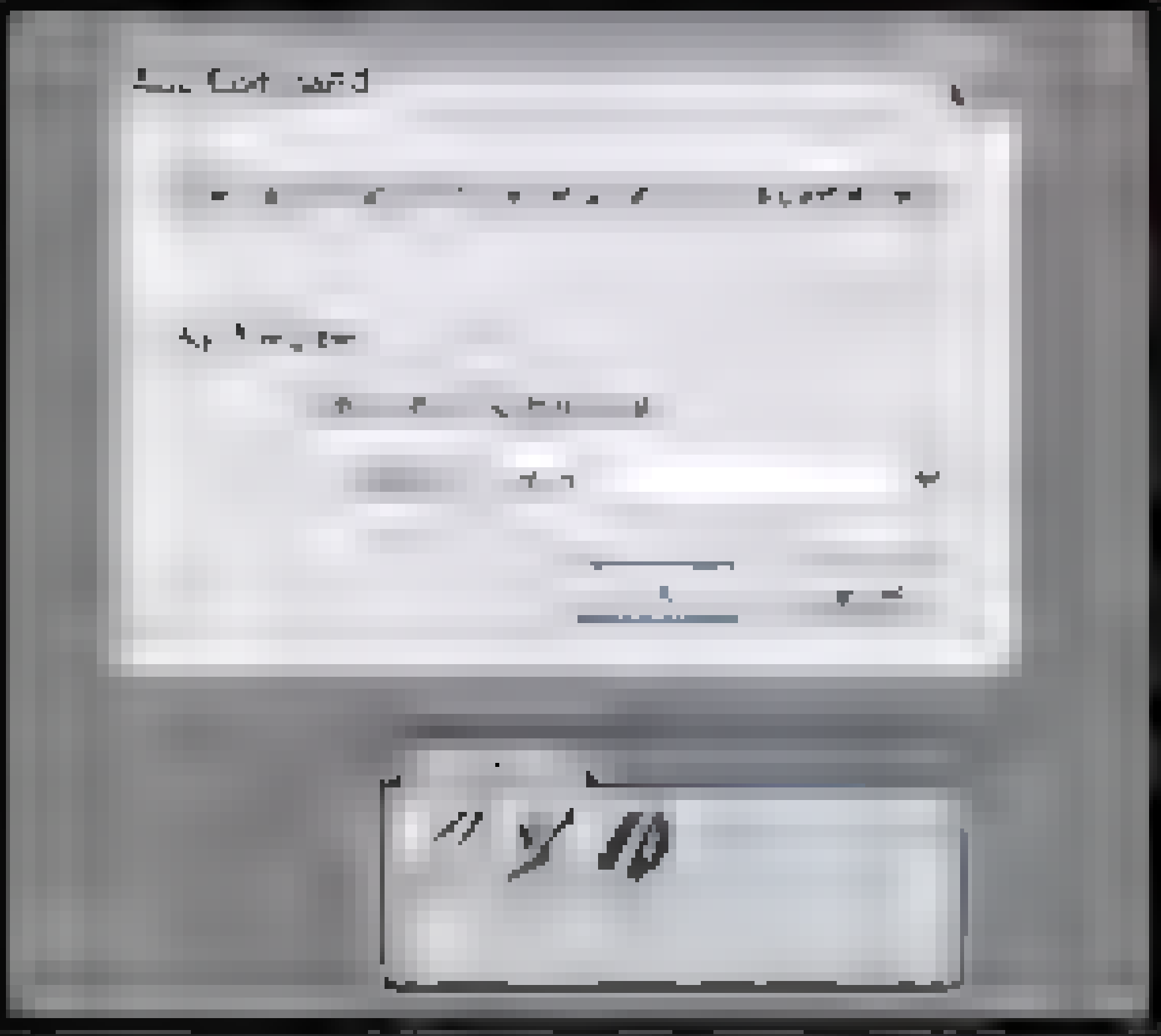
Other improvements give the ability to anchor horizontal palettes, such as the Property Bar and Brush Selector, at top or bottom of the screen, and the option to have the Toolbox displayed in horizontal aspect as an alternative to traditional vertical (Edit>Preferences>Interface).

1 Panels and palettes



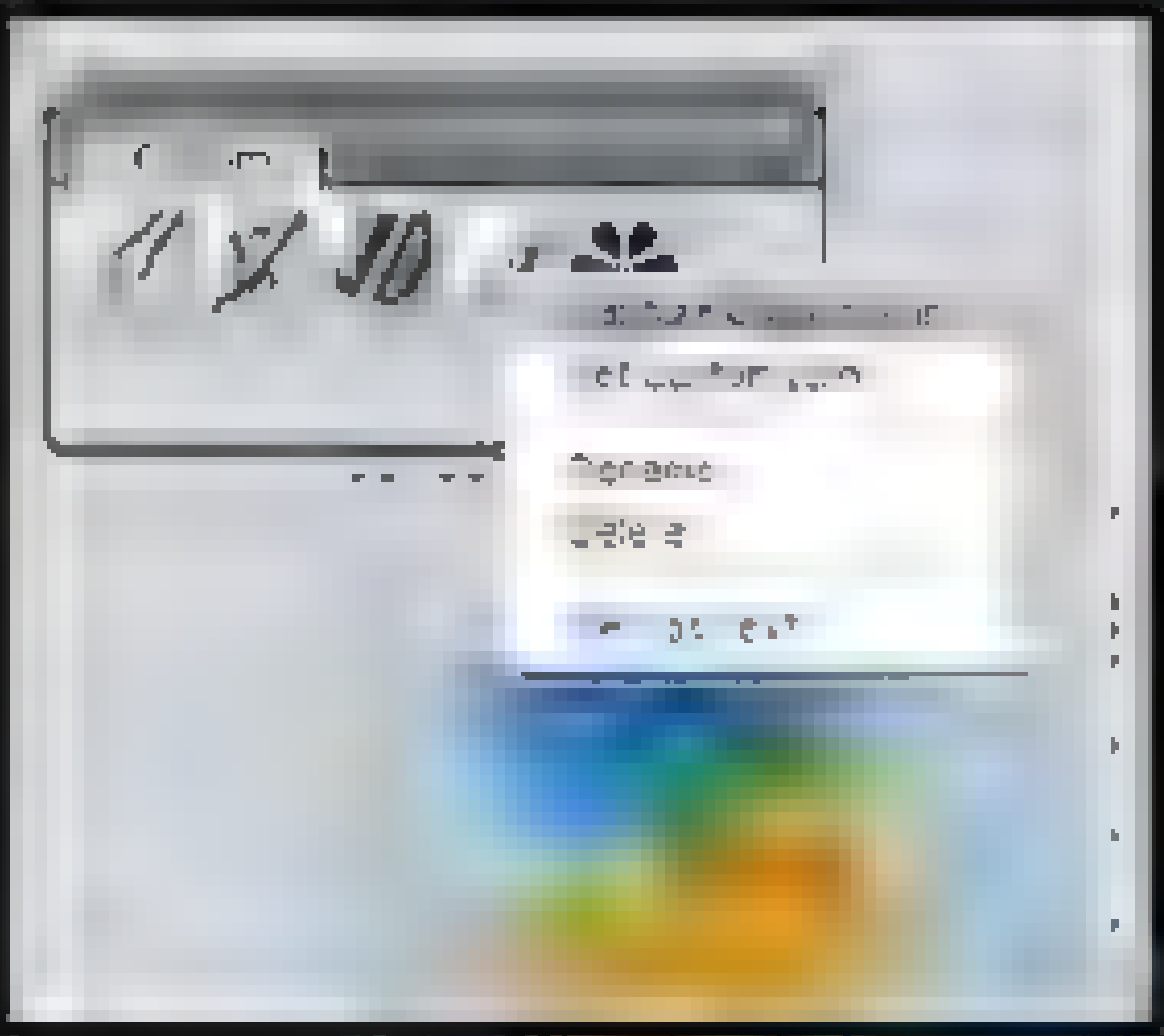
Panels can be grouped within palettes for convenience. Grab a panel's tab and drag it towards a palette. A faint blue line will appear showing where your panel will be inserted. If the line is vertical then your panel will appear beside the existing panel(s). If you want to insert a panel above or below another one, simply drag your panel so that a horizontal line appears in the desired location.

2 Create custom palettes



Hold Shift and drag a brush icon from the Brush Selector onto the workspace. A custom palette is created. Choose Window>Custom Palette>Add Command. Under Add to, select your new palette. Choose any menu command (for example, Edit>Flip Horizontal) then select OK. Your command appears on your palette. Right-click the command and choose View As Icon if you prefer.

3 Create custom icons



Create a new canvas, optionally with Color RGB (199,200,202), and paint an icon design. Select your painting with Rectangular Selection (hold Shift after you start dragging for a square selection). Right-click an icon on your custom palette and choose Capture Custom Icon. Alternatively, choosing Set Custom Icon… selects an image from file. You can move icons within and between custom palettes by Shift-dragging.

Artist PROFILE

Simon is a self-taught freelance illustrator who specialises in fantasy, sci-fi and horror. He works primarily on game art, book covers, private commissions, cards and magazines.
paintorly.co.uk

MANAGE YOUR PALETTES

A. Palette
This acts as a holder for one or more panels. Within a palette, panels can be organised horizontally (such as Dab Profile and Brush Calibration in this example) and/or vertically. To reposition, simply drag the palette header bar.

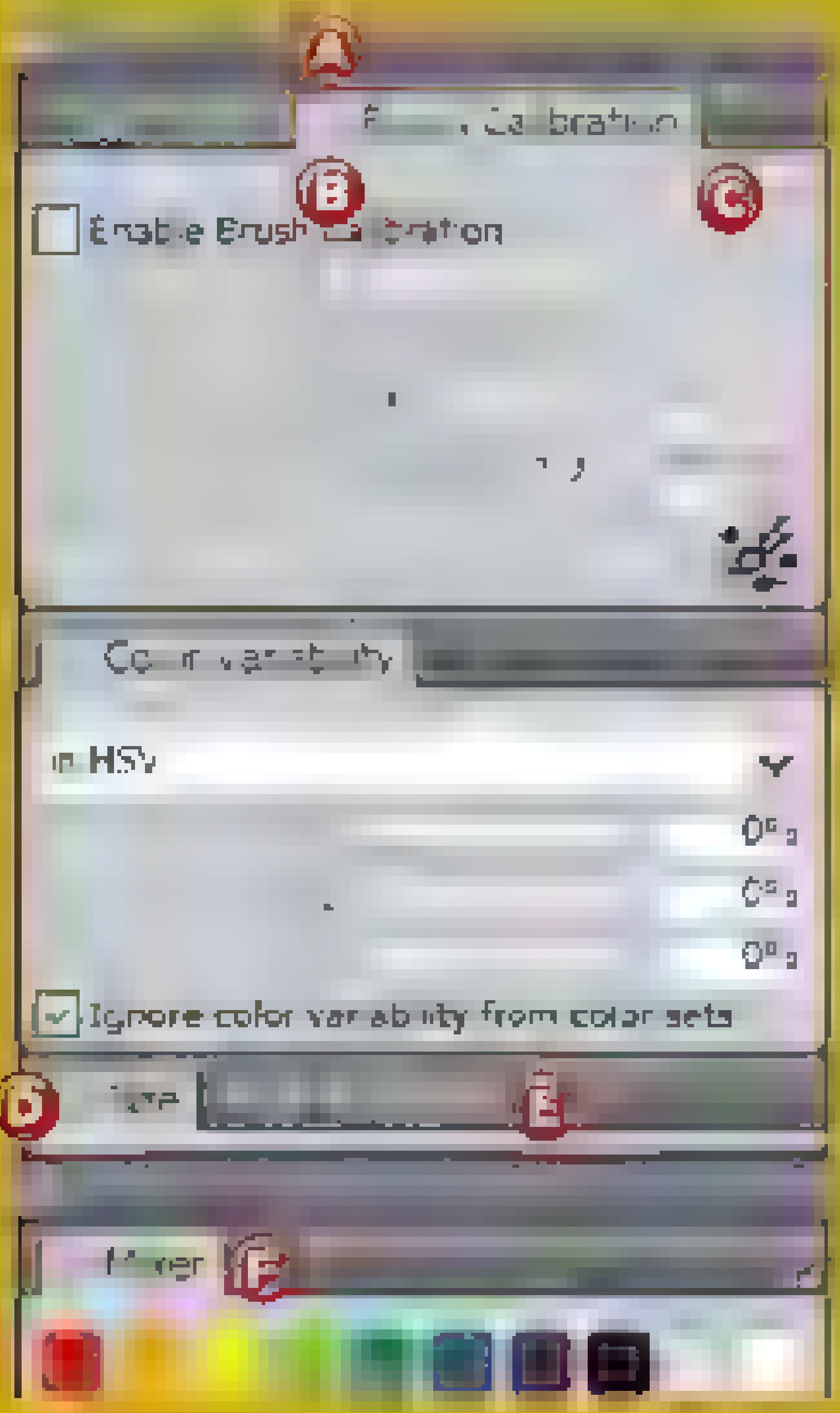
B. Close panel
This removes an individual panel. If the palette holds no more panels then it too will disappear.

C. Visible panel
The lighter shade of grey indicates that this is an active panel. Note that only one side-by-side panel at a time can be seen.

D. Minimised panel
If all panels side-by-side are minimised then they appear as a line of tabs. Double-click an active panel tab to either minimise or expand it.

E. Non-active panel
Click a greyed-out panel tab to make that panel visible. The other panels in the group will be repositioned automatically.

F. Single panel
In this example the Mixer is a single panel in a palette of its own. It's snapped to align with the first palette, but isn't part of it.


A
Brush Calibration
B
C
☐ Enable Brush Calibration
Color Variability
in HSV
0%
0%
0%
☑ Ignore color variability from color sets
D
E
Mixer
F

Photoshop

LEARN HOW TO AGE YOUR FANTASY ART

Daren Bader takes us through his bare-bones approach to image making and explains how to "beat up" an illustration so that it looks traditional

For this workshop I was asked to do a classic fantasy piece. For me, classic fantasy is pre-digital, pre-Star Wars, around the early to mid-70s. I grew up on Tarzan and Conan comic books, Ray Harryhausen's Sinbad movies, Godzilla and King Kong, and of course Frank Frazetta's paperback and magazine covers. Back then a giant bat could hold its own as The Monster, as opposed to a parasitic alien who bursts from your chest and grows into a creature unlike any we'd seen before. With this as my task, my goal is to paint something that feels wholly traditional while using non-traditional tools.

When working digitally I use a Cintiq pressure-sensitive monitor with Photoshop. I tend to use the same basic tools: the Brush tool in Normal mode (although sometimes I use Overlay mode to intensify colours and contrast, or Lighten or Darken modes), the Dodge/Burn tool for quick contrast manipulation, the Eraser and the Scale/Rotate tool.

The brushes that I use tend to have heavy texture, which brings an organic looseness to the overall image. I don't like a slick digital look, so I try my best to kill it by not using soft or clean-edged brushes. In fact, I enjoy having to beat up my image, to bruise and scar it, eliminating that cold digital feeling. Ironically, it's because I'm working digitally that I'm able to do so. The best (and worst) aspect of digital painting is the countless amount of directions one can explore so easily and quickly. Furthermore, there are no brushes to clean or toxic splatters of turpentine to wipe off the walls. And that's a good thing!

Artist
PROFILE

[illegible]

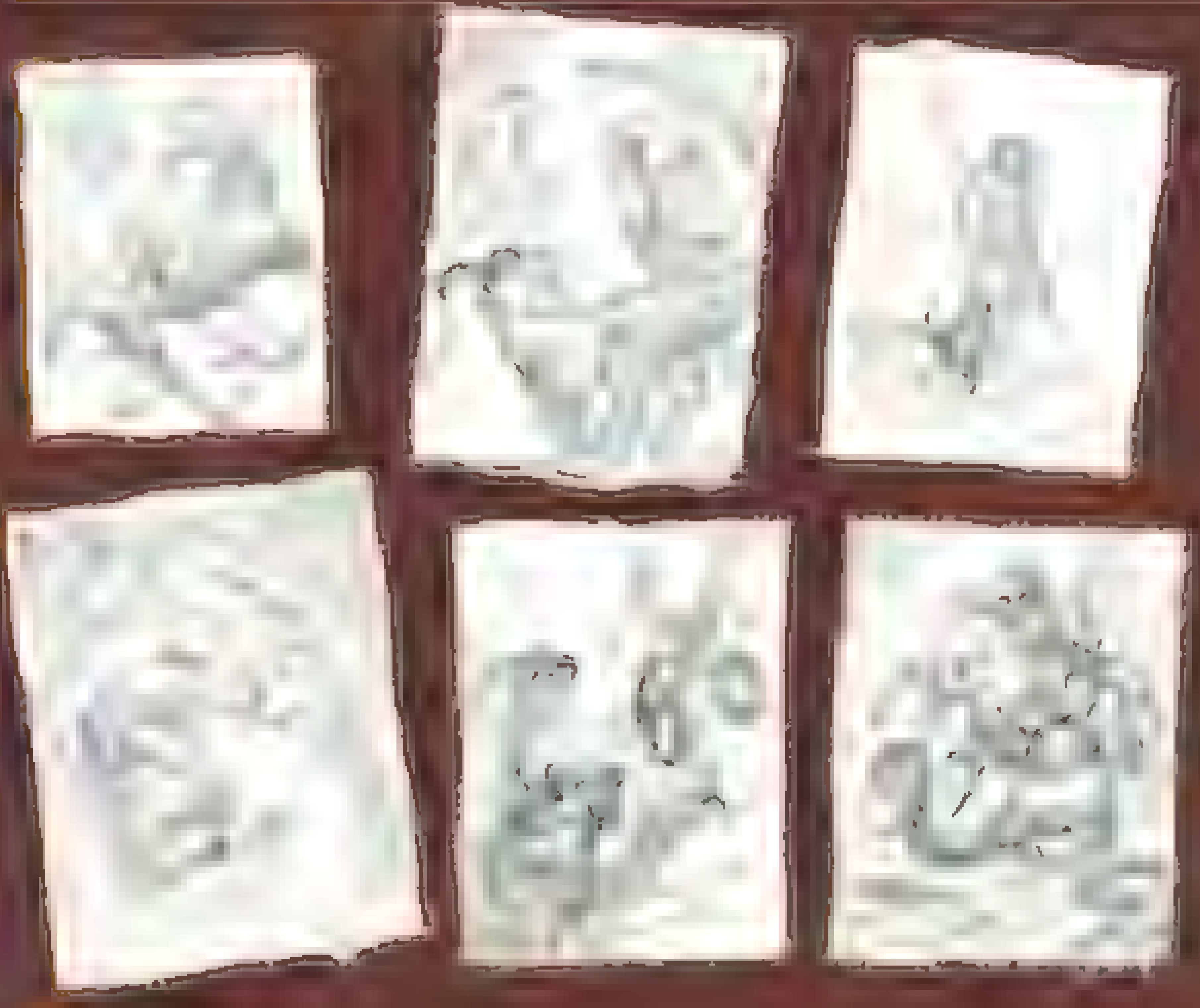
[illegible] Diego, where [illegible] ently finished Red [illegible] freelance illustrator for trading card games and publishing companies.
darenbader.com

DVD Assets
The files you need are on your DVD in the Daren Bader folder in the Workshops section.

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

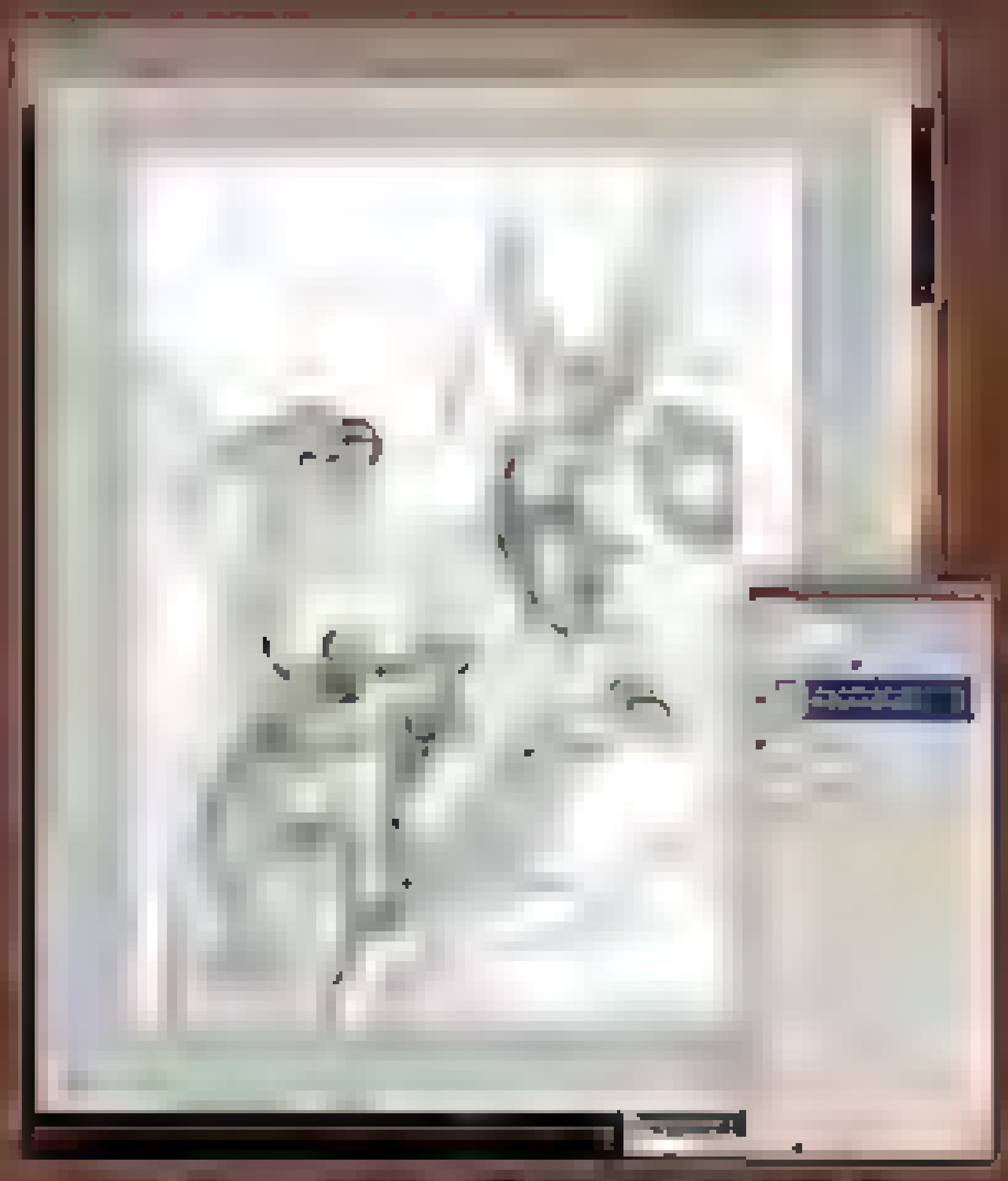
[illegible]

[illegible] is a chunky textured brush that lays down lots of random noise when [illegible]



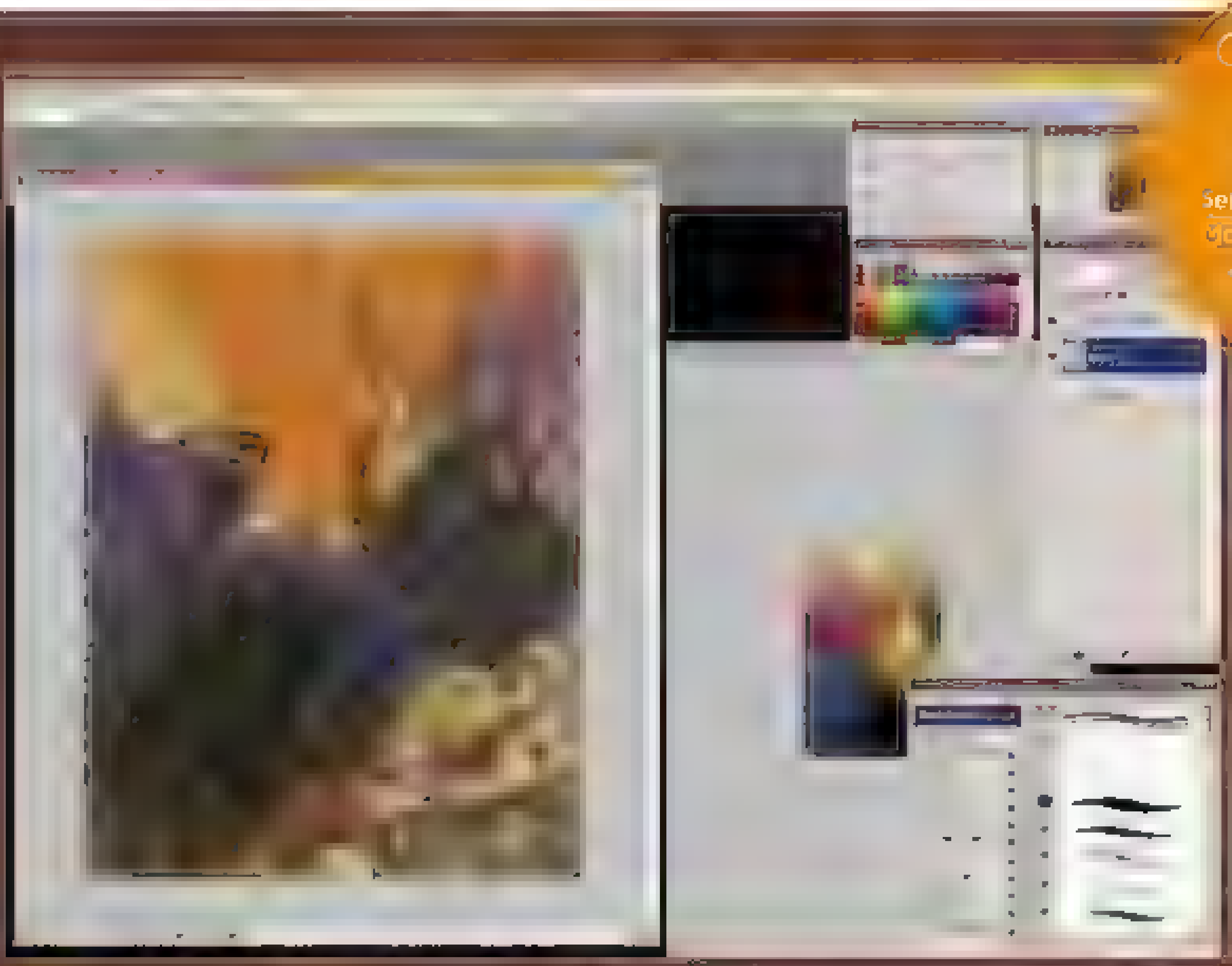
1 Thumbnail sketches

I start with multiple thumbnail sketches exploring various ideas. These are pencil on paper and are about [illegible] inches. Because I'm going to be painting this image digitally, I don't worry too much about the details. I know I can always manipulate the image to my heart's content. If I were going to do the painting traditionally, I would do more reference work on the figure and the bat before committing to canvas.



2 Scan the sketch and set up the file

The thumbnail sketch is small so I scan it at 1200dpi. I then duplicate the sketch layer and set this new layer's properties to Multiply. Next I create what I call a "painting layer" and place it below the sketch. This enables the sketch layer's darks to always be darker than the colours I'll be applying, while the sketch's whites don't affect the colours at all. I also create a quick palette to colour pick from.

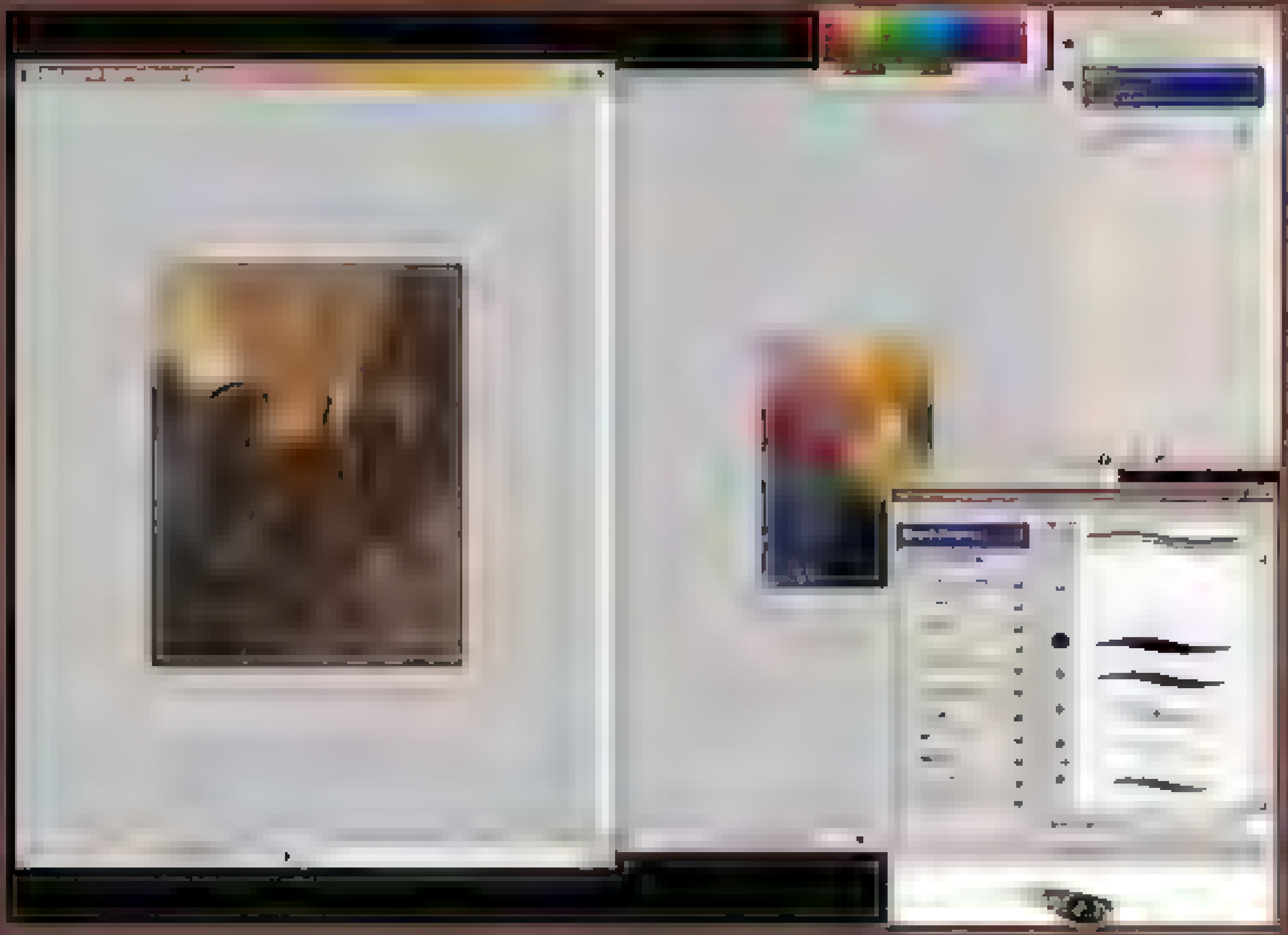


3 Quick colour block-in

Even at this high resolution (1,200dpi) the sketch is still relatively small. I like to keep it that way so I can quickly block in colour and value without having to worry about the brushes chugging. This is a fun stage to explore colour and value ideas, and with the Sketch layer set to Multiply it's just like a page from a colouring book where no matter how much you colour, you don't lose the original drawing.

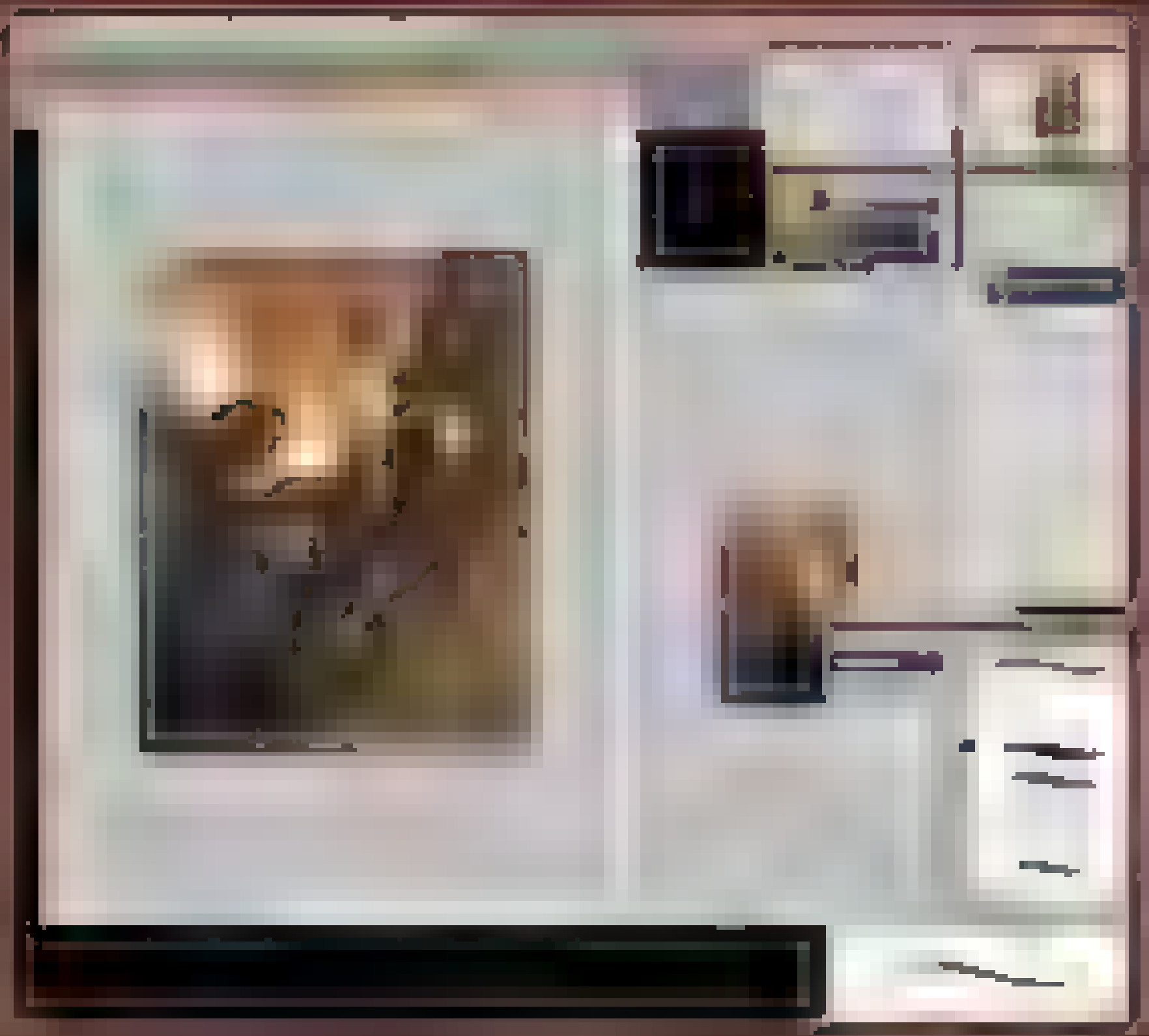
4 Refine colour and value scheme

I constantly reduce the image on my screen drastically, which is similar to walking across the room while working traditionally. This makes it possible to stay focused on the image as a whole, instead of getting lost in a single spot – there's plenty of time for that after the foundation has been laid. Eventually, after trying out various colour and value schemes, I refine it all to something that feels like the right direction.



5 Gently intensifying the image

One digital tool that I particularly enjoy using is Dodge and Burn. Although it's easily abused, I like the way it'll bring in high chroma and value into the painting, creating new colours and pushing the richness. But as I said, it can be easily overused. To me, what makes digital work cold is super-clean airbrush, too much detail and the Dodge and Burn tool! Use with caution!

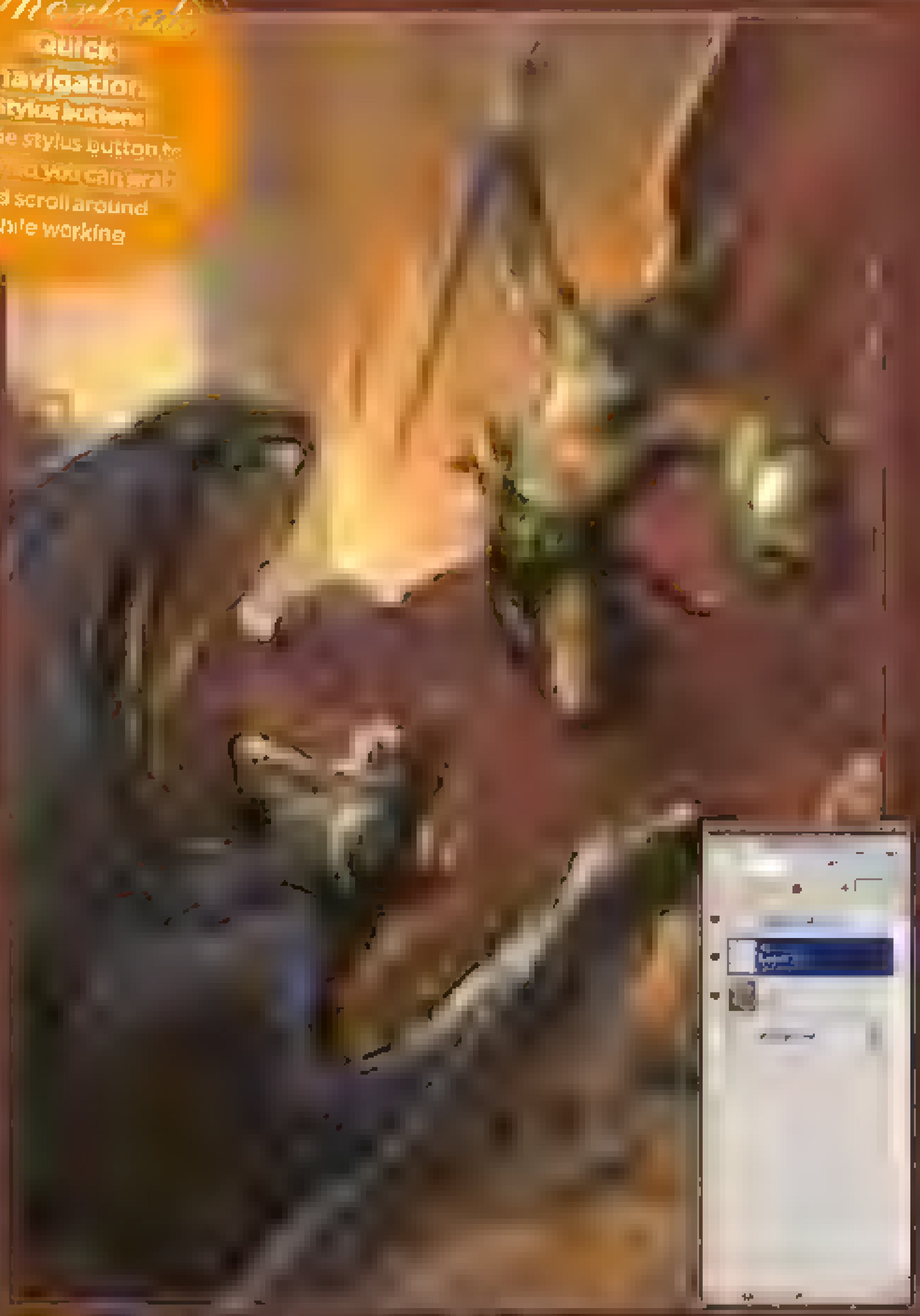


Shortcuts

Quick navigation

Stylus buttons

Set the stylus button to [illegible] so you can grab and scroll around while working



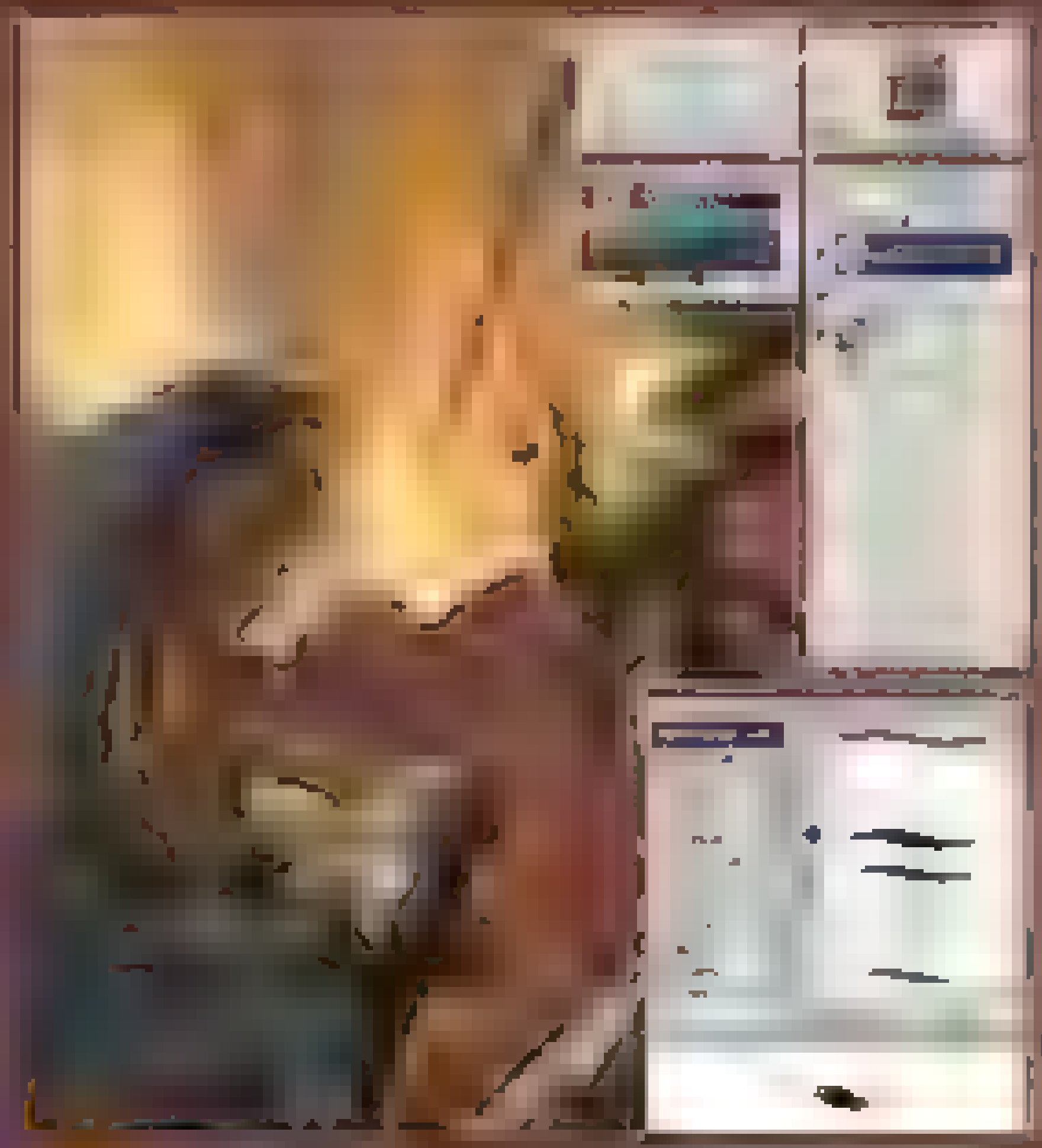
6 New layer over good work

When I get to a stage where I like what I've done, I collapse my paint layers and just create a new layer on top, but still under the sketch layer. While I work on the new paint layer, I constantly turn it on and off to make sure the new painting I'm doing is better than what I had previously. If it isn't, I can easily erase the new work to reveal the old, better work below.

PRO SECRETS

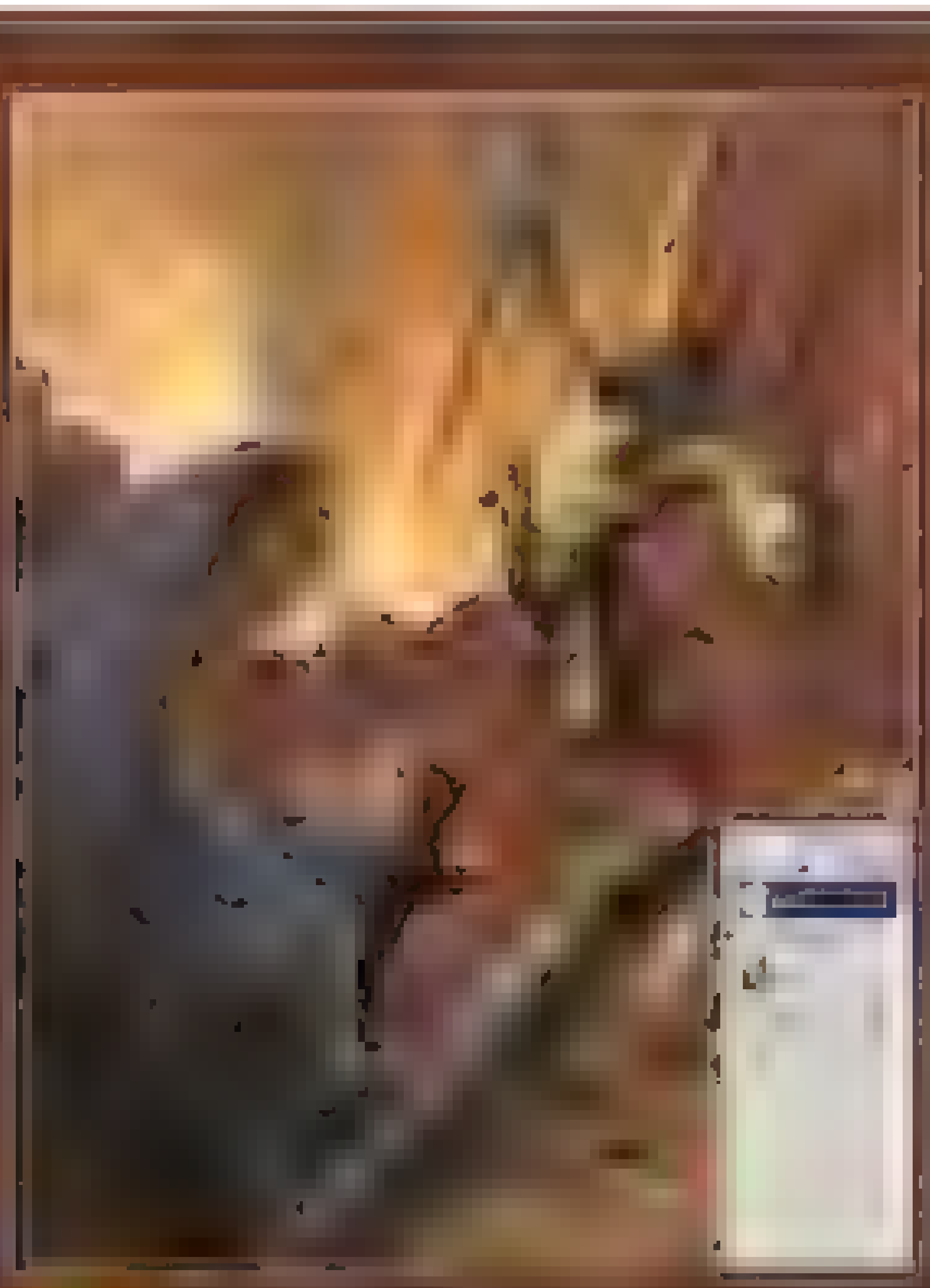
Have no fear

Don't let intimidation hinder your progress. You have the chance to explore directions and ideas when working digitally, so follow your instincts to see where they may lead, time allowing of course. Just save your image, create a new layer and dive right in! Even if what you learn isn't applicable to your current piece, you might find something that'll spark other ideas or be useful for a different image.



7 Opaque lights

I try to work below the sketch for as long as possible, to retain the looseness and spontaneity of the brushwork without fear of losing the drawing, but eventually it's time to paint on top of the sketch. I create a new layer over the sketch layer and continue to work opaquely. Occasionally, I'll also change the sketch layer to sepia or play with its opacity to get rid of the colouring book look as well.

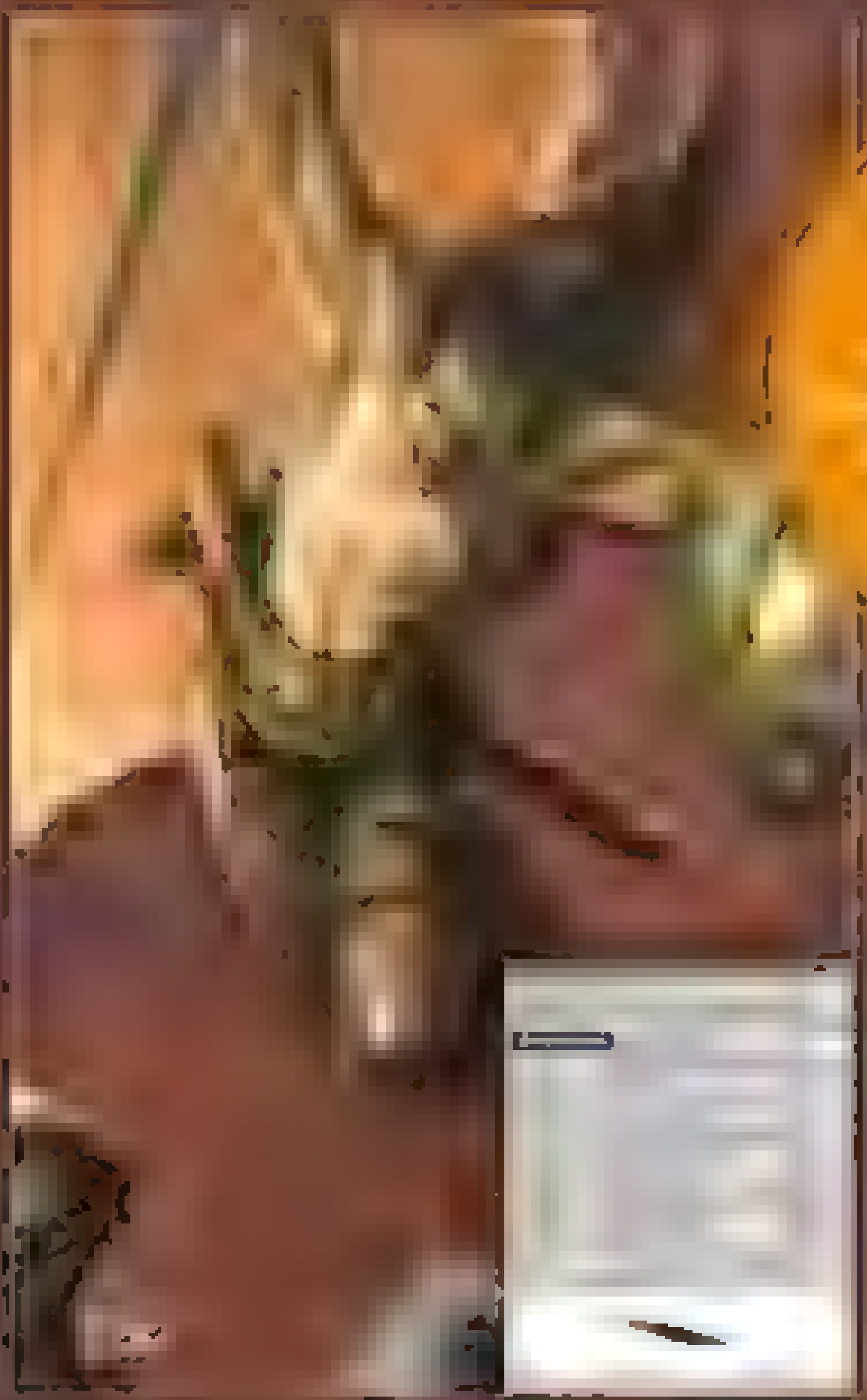


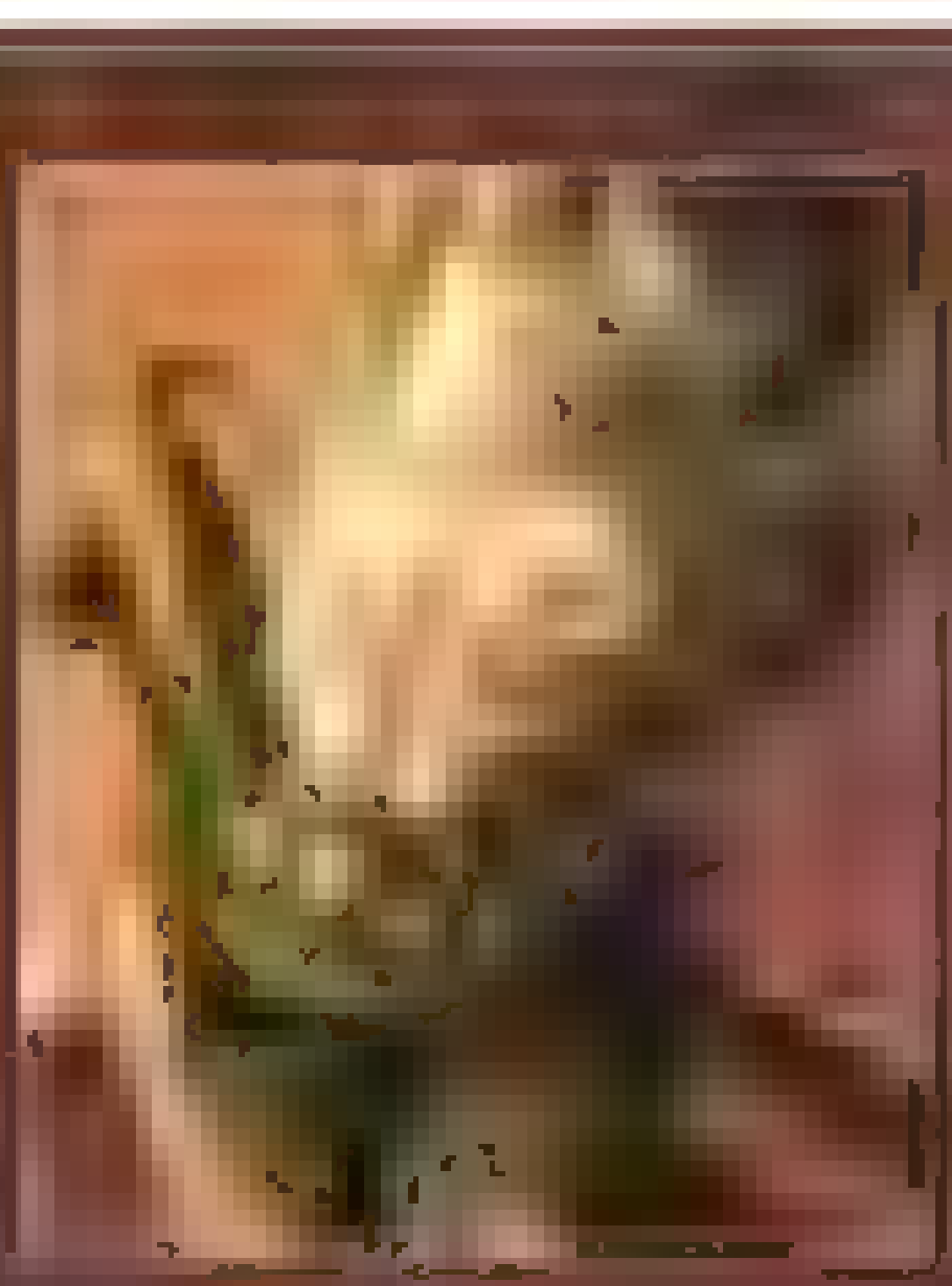
Bat details

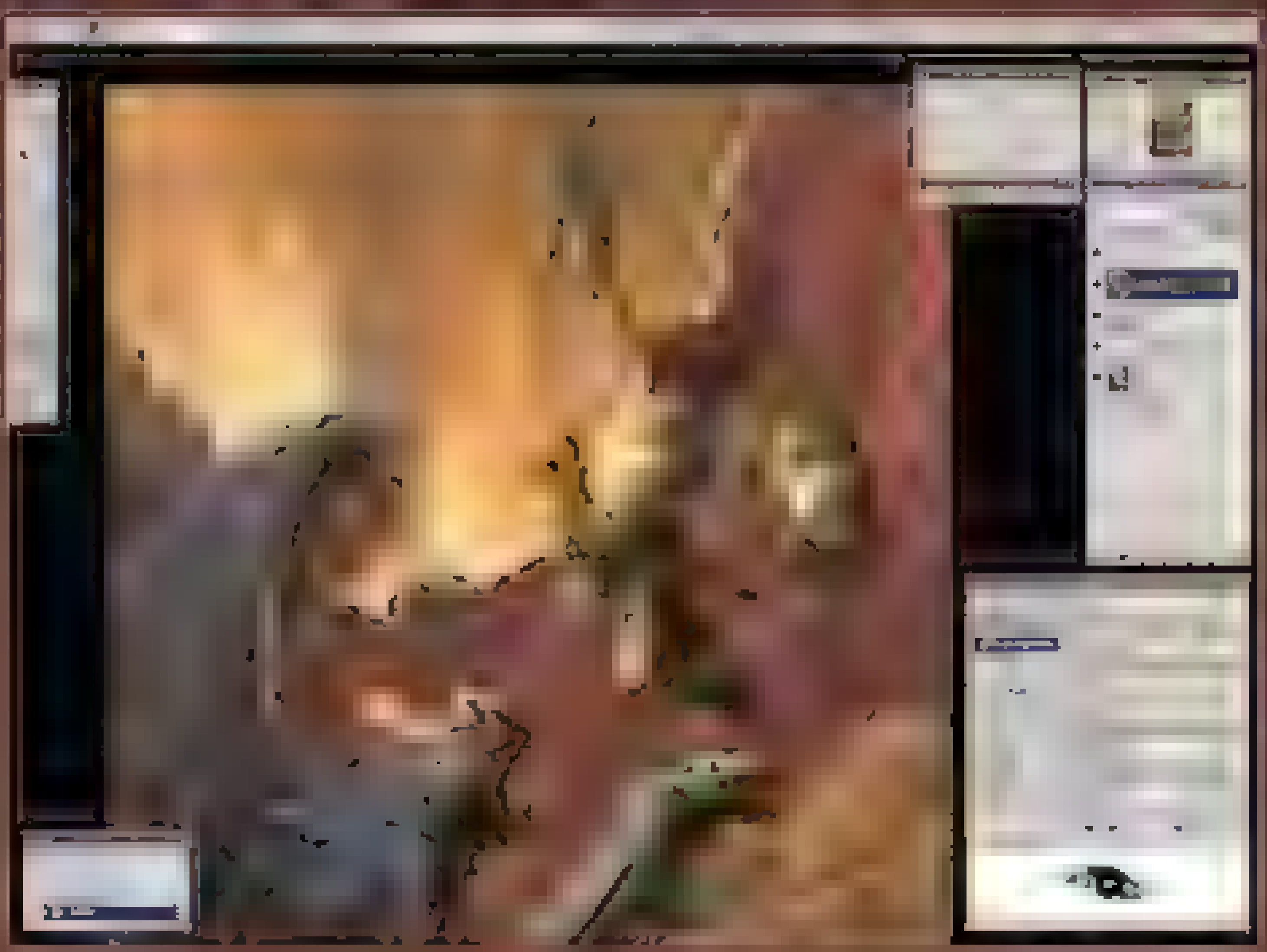
Before I begin with the details, I resize the image to its final resolution of 9x12 inches at 350dpi. I begin to refine details, alternating between the bat and the background. Some people love to jump right into their focal point when they begin this stage, but I like to put in more time before I get to the focal point. Hopefully, this way, I'll be more in tune with the painting and the focal point will get the best I can offer.

Character details

I'm finally ready to start on the barbarian. I begin with his face and for the first time I zoom into the image, alternating between 66.67 per cent and 100 per cent. I also use a different brush in this area. Although this brush still has a decent amount of organic noise, it has a velvety-smooth feel to the paint application, contrasting nicely from the earlier textured brush. This new brush allows for much more control over the details and colour blending, while maintaining an organic feel.

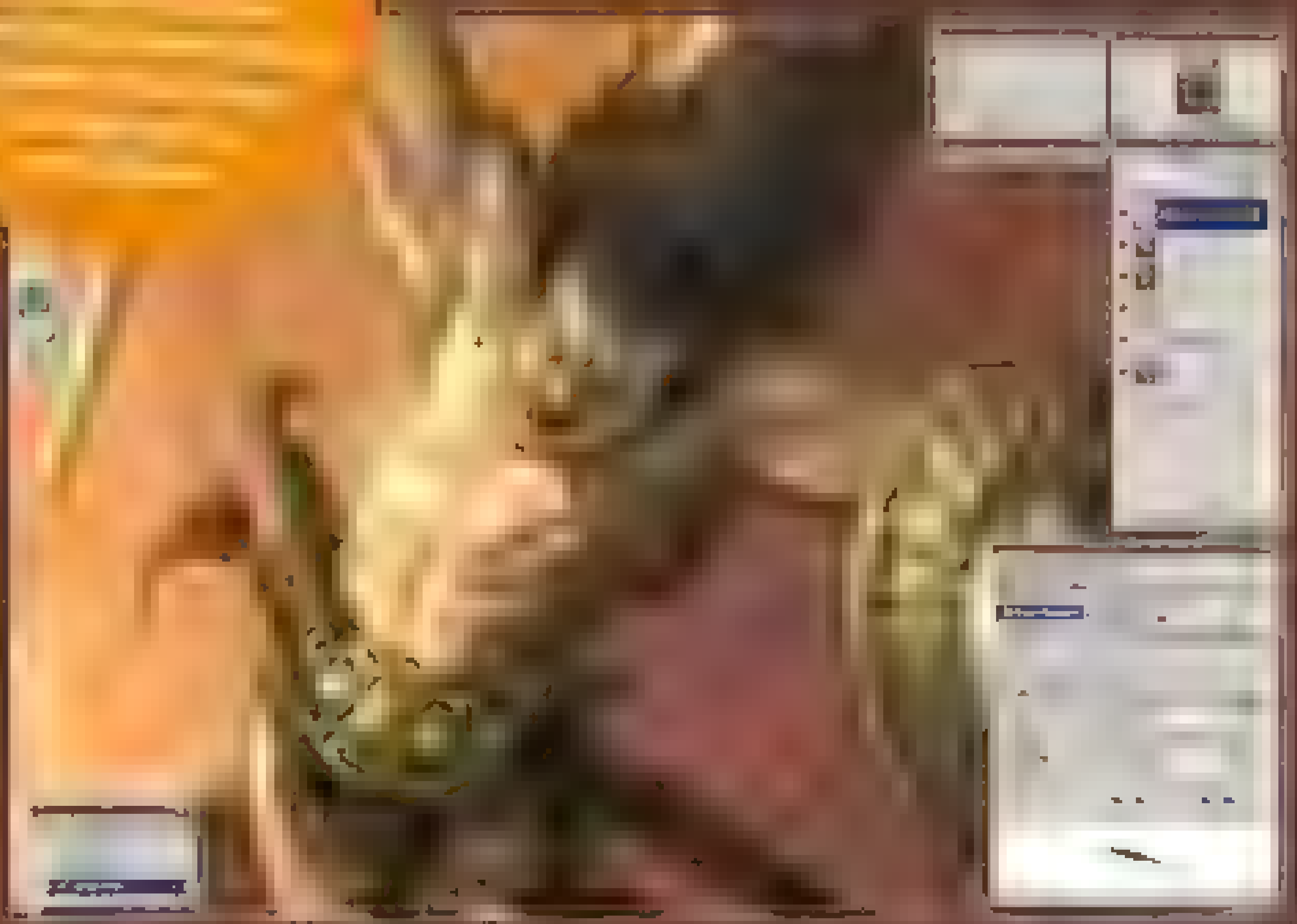






PRO SECRETS

[illegible]



Refine the body

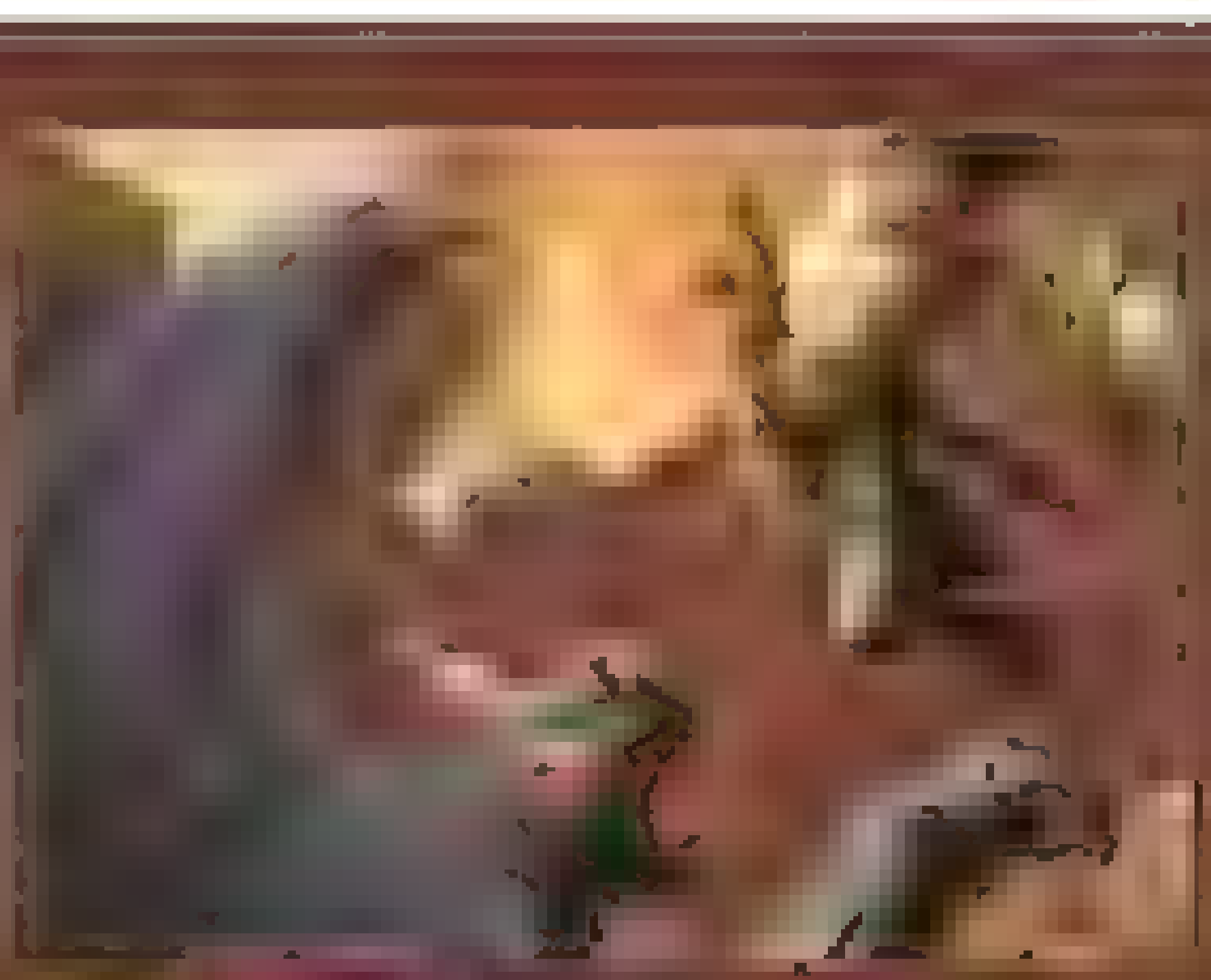
I continue to use the new brush as I refine the details of the barbarian's anatomy and belt. The hand in particular needed extra attention, because I hadn't worked out how he was going to be holding the sword. Yes, this is something that should have been worked out way back in the sketch stage, but working digitally gives me the latitude to rework it.

11 New collapsed layer

While I almost exclusively use the Normal mode for brushes, I'll occasionally use the Lighten or Darken mode as well. This mode doesn't work well on layered files because it only considers the values and colours on the layer you're working on. For this reason, I select the whole image and copy it (Ctrl+Shift+C), then paste as a new layer. Now I have the whole image as a single layer and the Lighten and Darken modes work as expected.

Further refinement

I reduce the image on screen regularly to see how things are reading at a distance. I also turn the current painting layer on and off to make sure I'm making the picture better, instead of worse. I begin to refine the shield and the scabbard as well as the barbarian, working out the lighting on the planes of his torso.

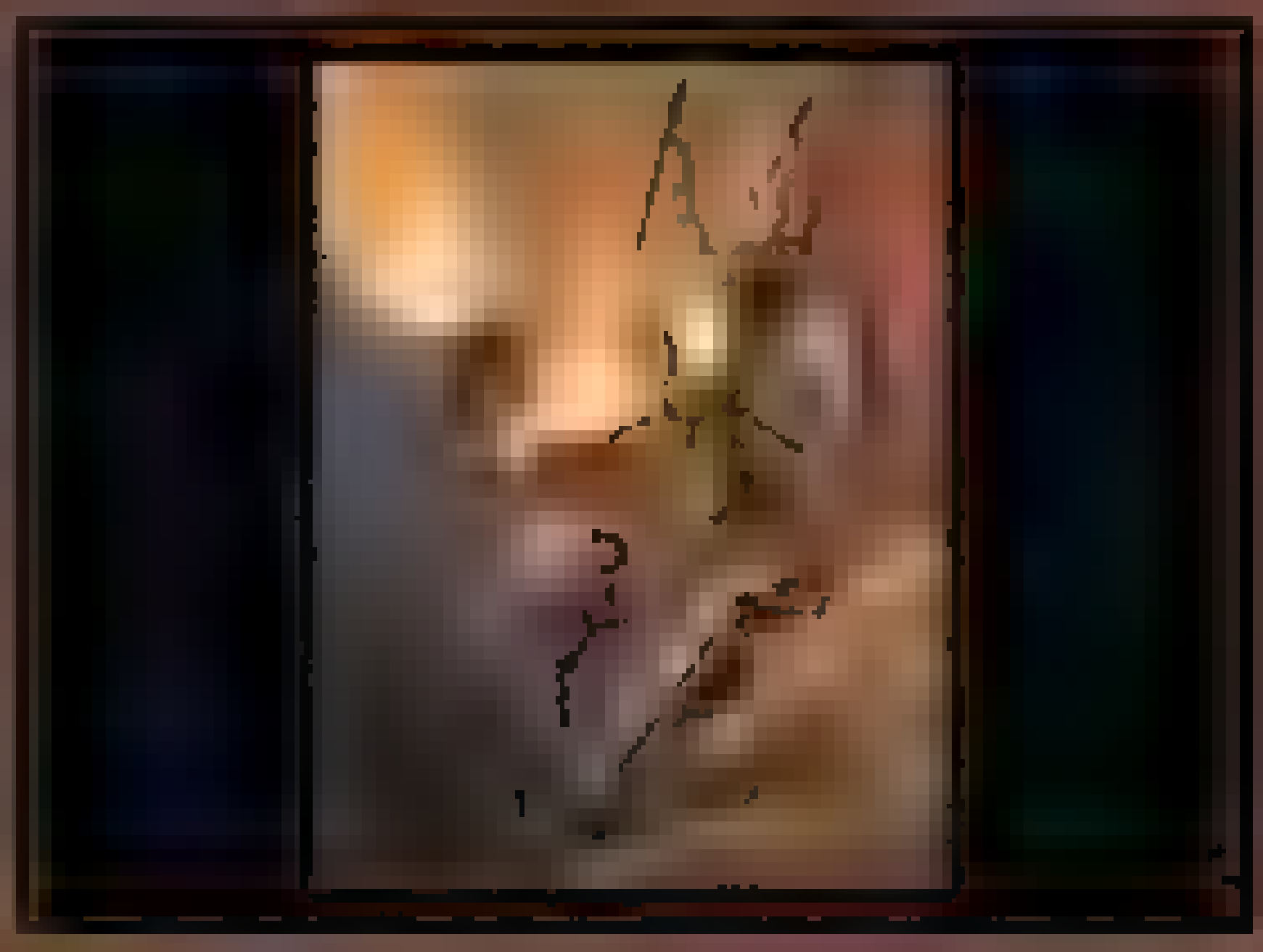


Minor brightening

One of the problems I notice, while I have the image reduced to about the size of a postage stamp on my monitor, is that the rock under the bat's left wing seems a touch too dark, pulling the viewer's eye to a sort of black hole in the image. I brighten the area with the Brush tool set to Lighten. I also paint out some remaining colour book lines in the far background with the brush in Lighten mode.

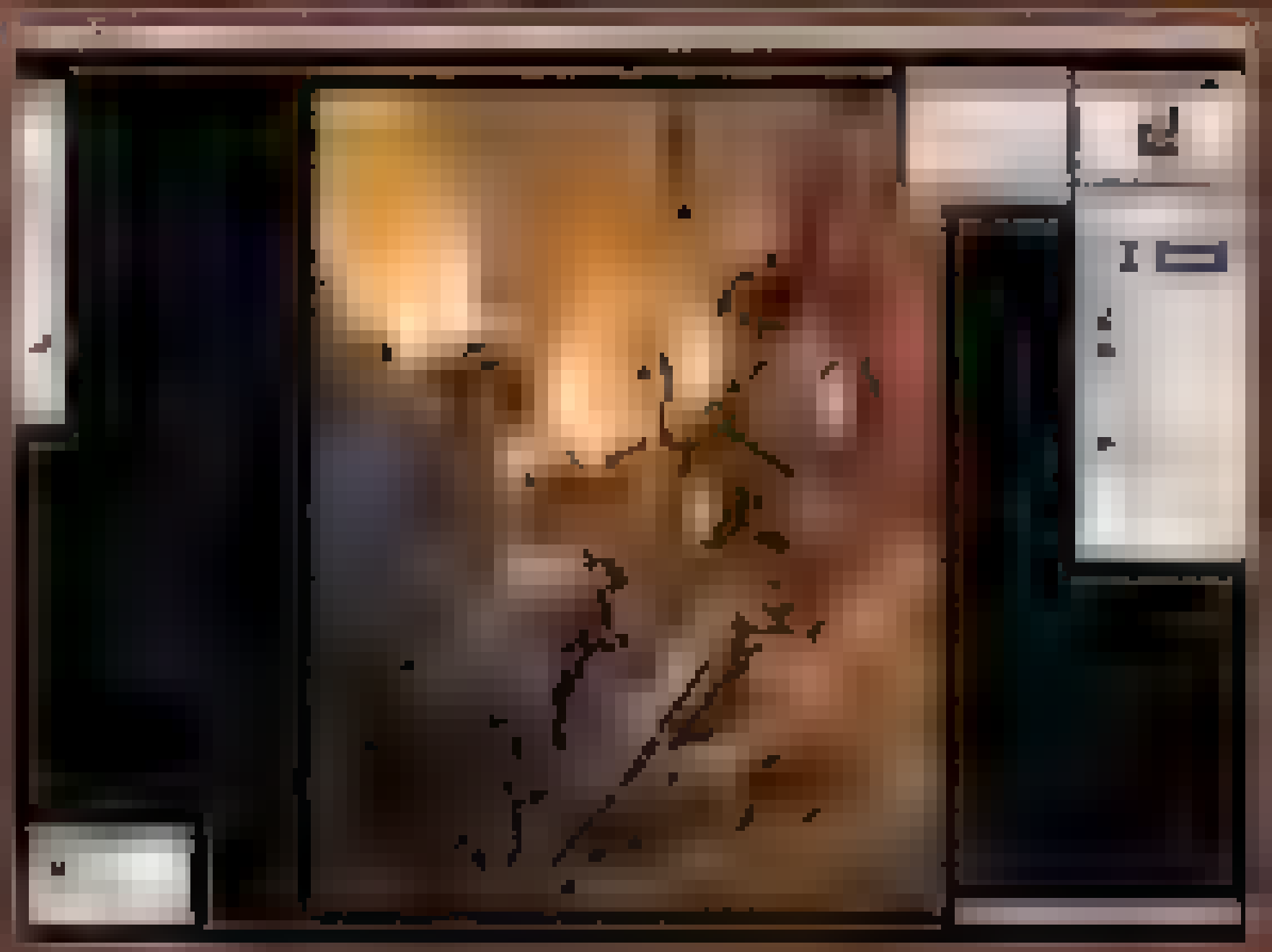
Assess the progress

I feel like I'm finally achieving my goal: a noisy, random looseness mixed with some tight points of detail in the focal areas. The composition and flow are still intact from the original thumbnail sketch. It's time to consider if this thing is done. I fill the screen with the image on a black background, remove the Photoshop palettes and examine the image.



15 Monitor compensation

After a little more noodling around I add some falling debris and call it done. Now, I have one last thing to do. Because my monitor is too dark, making my digital work appear washed out on other monitors, I have to compensate with an Adjustment layer to tweak the Levels of my image. (Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Levels). Although this makes the image too dark on my monitor, I know it'll look better on virtually everyone else's.



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Sketch Up & Painter

PAINTER'S MIRROR MODE EXPLORED

Dave Kendall uses Painter 12's new Mirror and Kaleidoscope tools to create an oppressive, dark fantasy landscape

Artist
PROFILE

Dave Kendall
COUNTRY: England

The Bristol-based artist started out illustrating book covers and more recently has worked on trading cards and comics.
rustybaby.com

DVD Assets

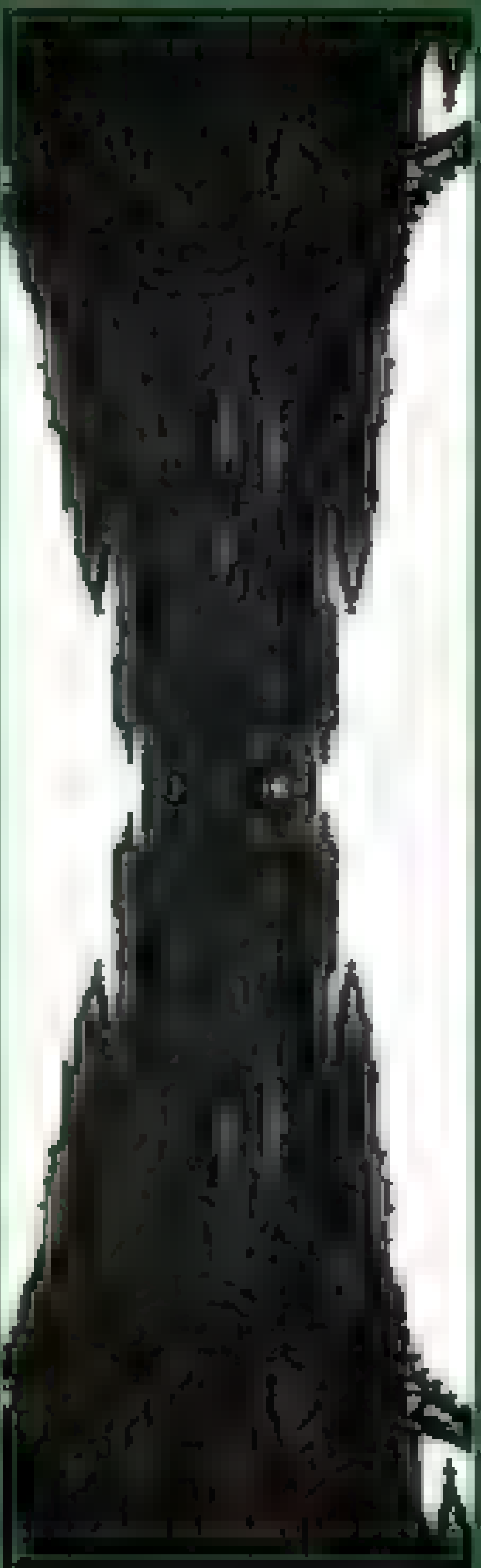
The files you need are on your DVD in the Workshops section
SOFTWARE: Painter 12 *(trial version)*

I'm currently a tourist in a world called Arakei, for a French graphic novel called La Compagnie des Lames. I'm about to explore some of the darker landscapes in the world, and this workshop will show my journey of discovery. The area that I'm painting probably won't win many awards for its hospitality...

Using Painter 12's new Mirror tools enables me to capture this tower's dark symmetry. This workshop should give some insight into how I use the tools, along with more traditional and classical approaches to render this environment.

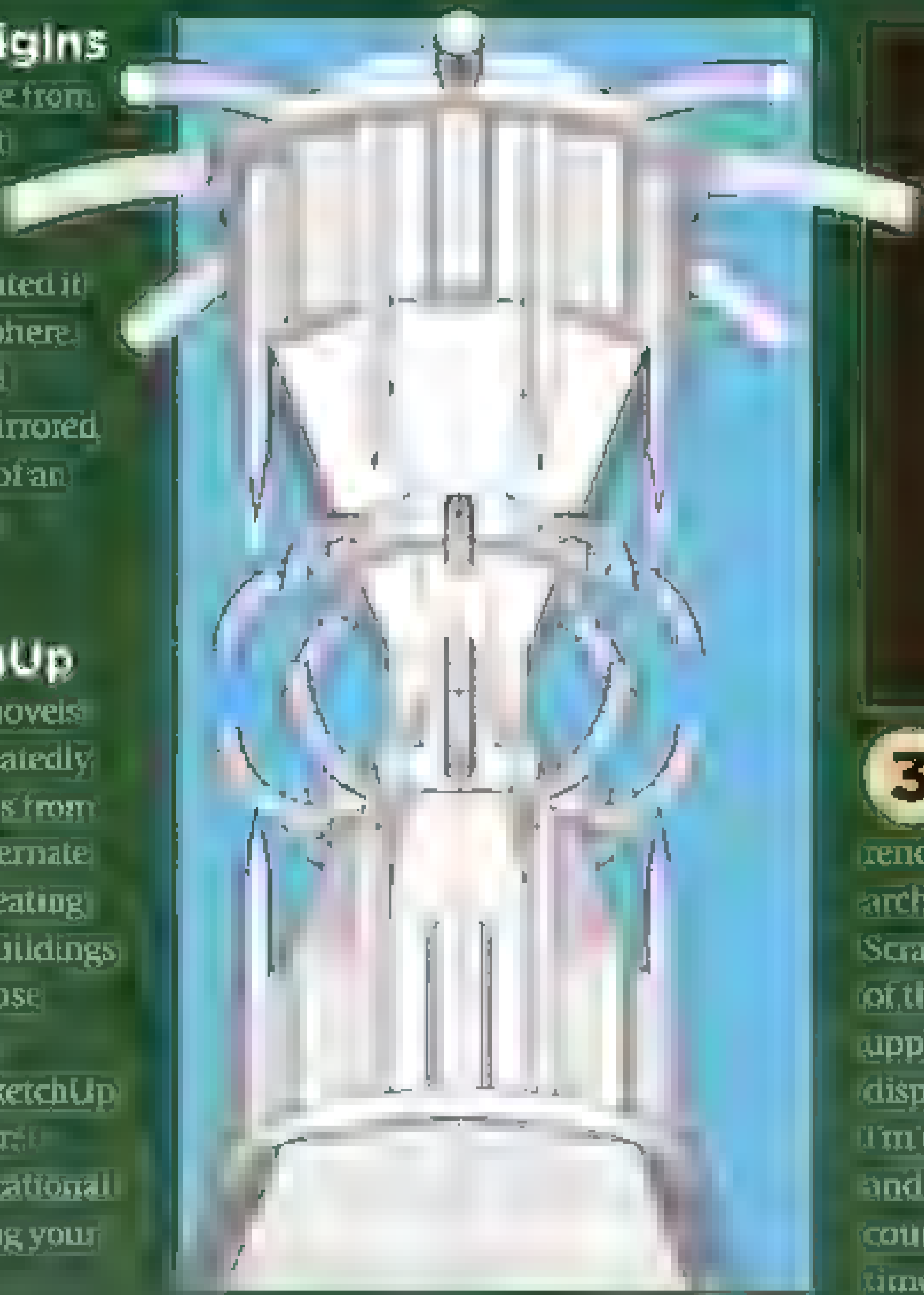
As useful as the new Mirror and Kaleidoscope tools are, they should be used sparingly. Mirror painting doesn't take into account light sources and viewpoint; however, I hope that this workshop and accompanying videos can provide you with some ideas on how these tools can be incorporated into the workflow of an illustration or concept piece. For me, Painter 12's new features are still very new, and I know that over the coming months fresh possibilities within the software will present themselves to me.

I also want to show you how software such as SketchUp and Sketchbook Pro for iPad help me to make creative decisions. I place a high priority on finding and photographing real-world references. I'll demonstrate how this approach can provide a springboard to find your own unique vision, as opposed to an internet search using stock photography.



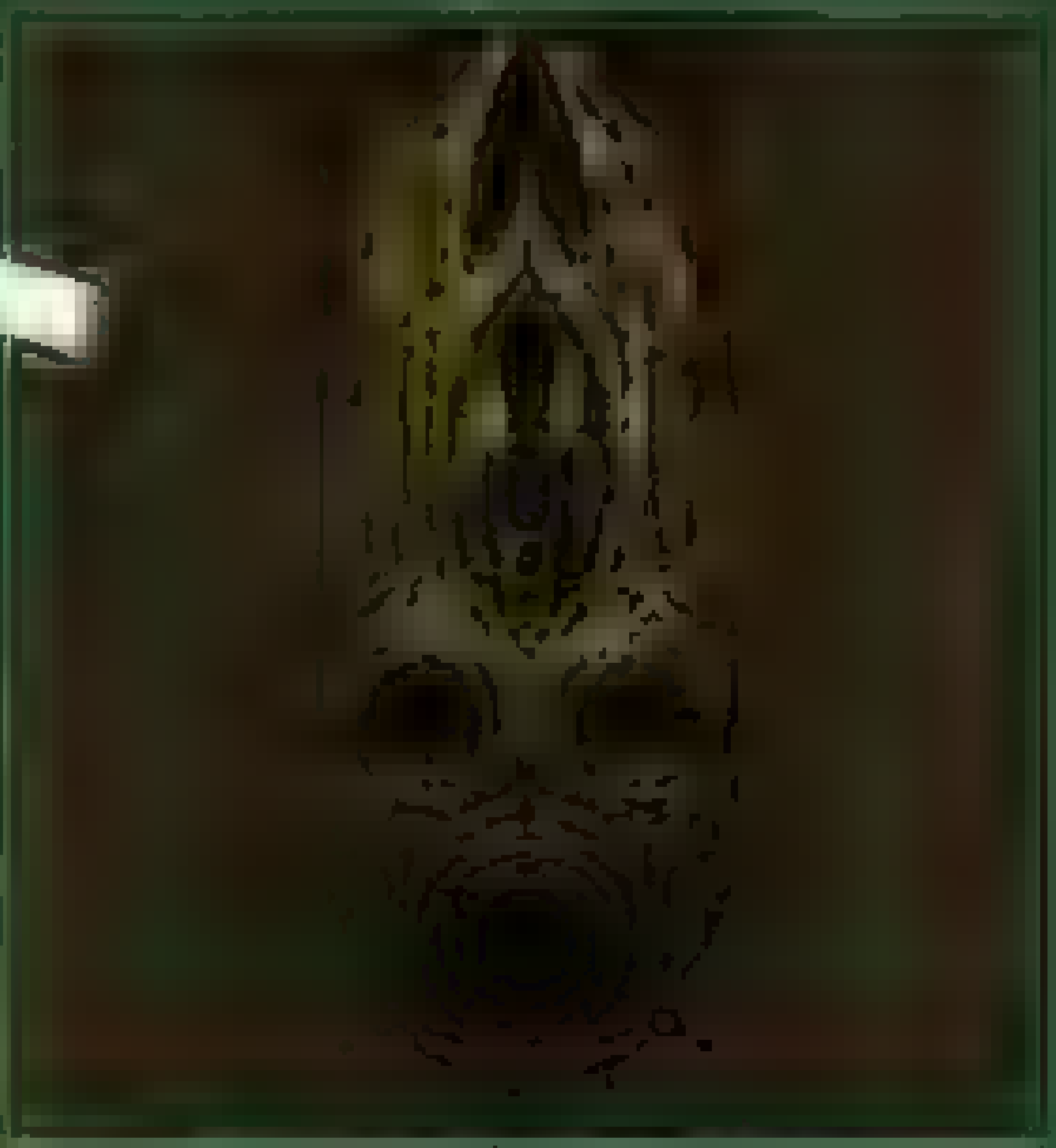
1 The painting's origins

The idea for this tower came from a visit to Edinburgh in Scotland. It was a cold, wet day and I took a photograph of the Sir Walter Scott memorial. The rain had painted it with a dark and glistening atmosphere. While searching for inspiration I'd inadvertently flipped and then mirrored the image to provide the embryo of an idea. So even then, mirroring was providing inspiration.



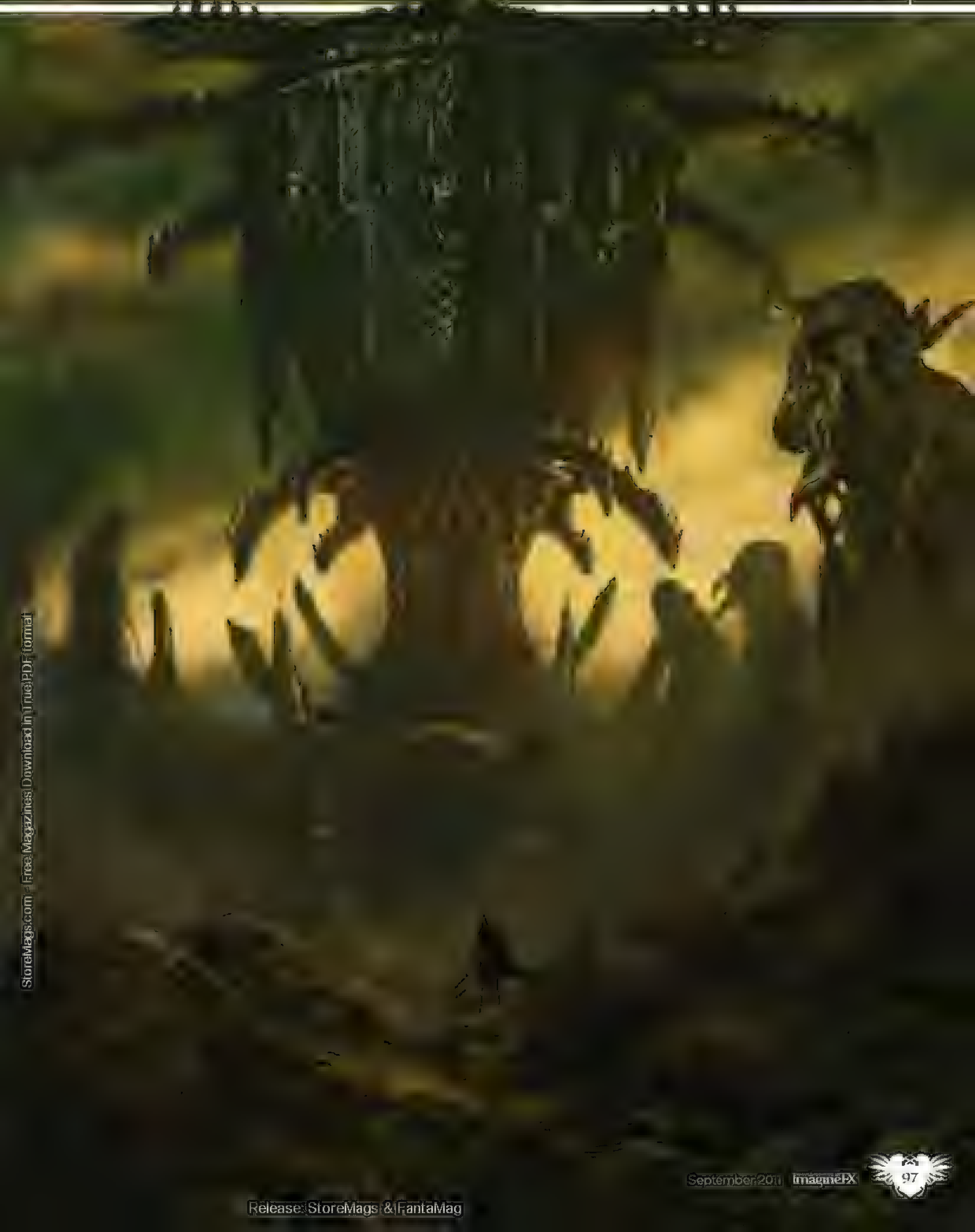
2 Help from SketchUp

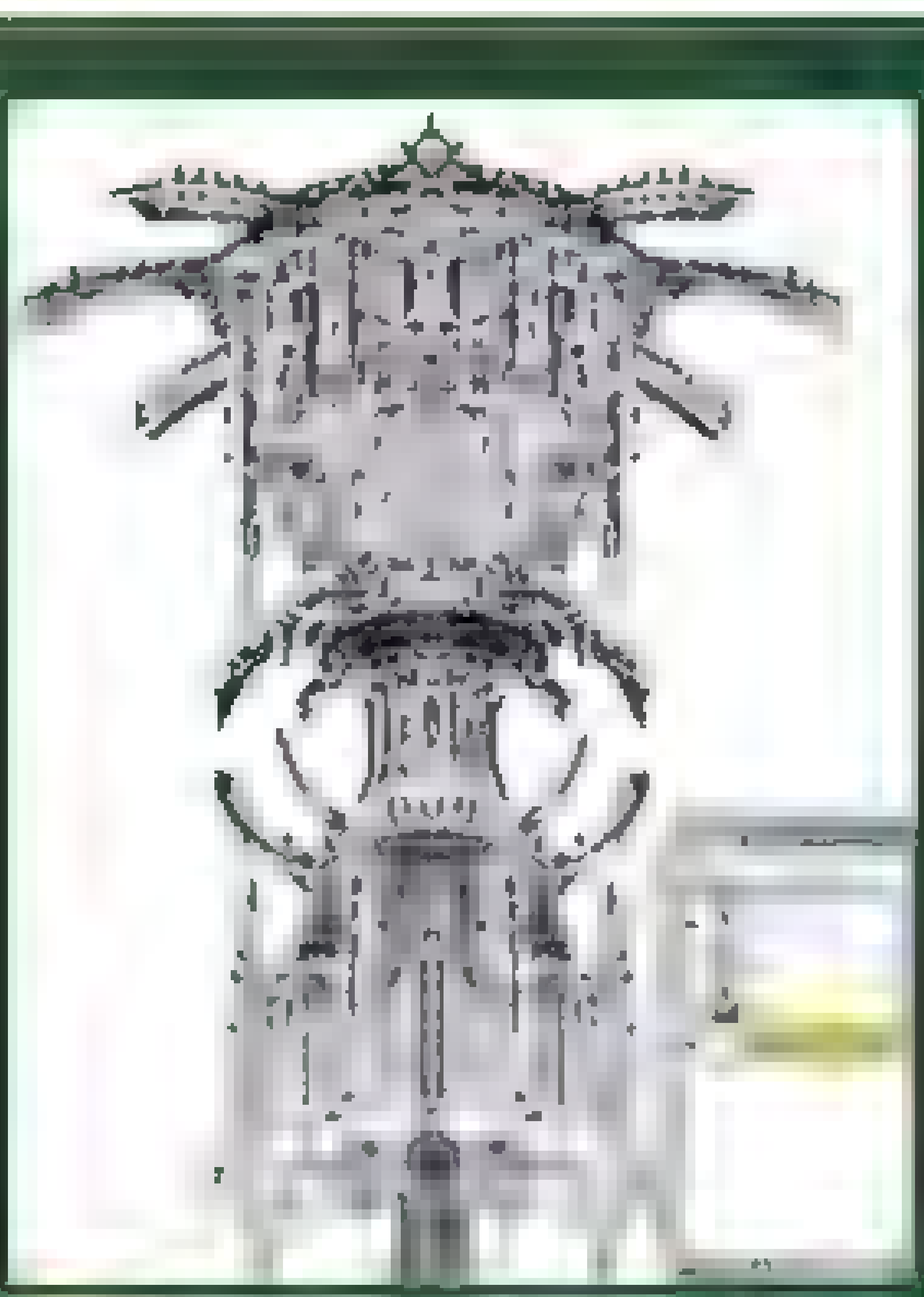
When illustrating graphic novels you'll find yourself having to repeatedly draw characters and environments from different viewpoints, and with alternate compositional considerations. Creating a virtual version of your rooms, buildings and towns will enable you to choose the perfect camera angle and add consistency to your world. I use SketchUp to build a basic model of my tower. I recommend using the highly educational online videos to help start building your own empires.



3 Room with a view

To get me in the mood I decide to render a smaller part of the tower's architecture. I use the Mirror tool and a Scratchboard brush to start drawing one of the sculptures containing the tower's upper combined windows and waste disposal units. It's based on a skull and I'm drawing on a mix of metal, organic and stonework textures to render it. Of course, using the Mirror tool halves the time you need to produce an image.





PRO SECRETS

Customise Painter

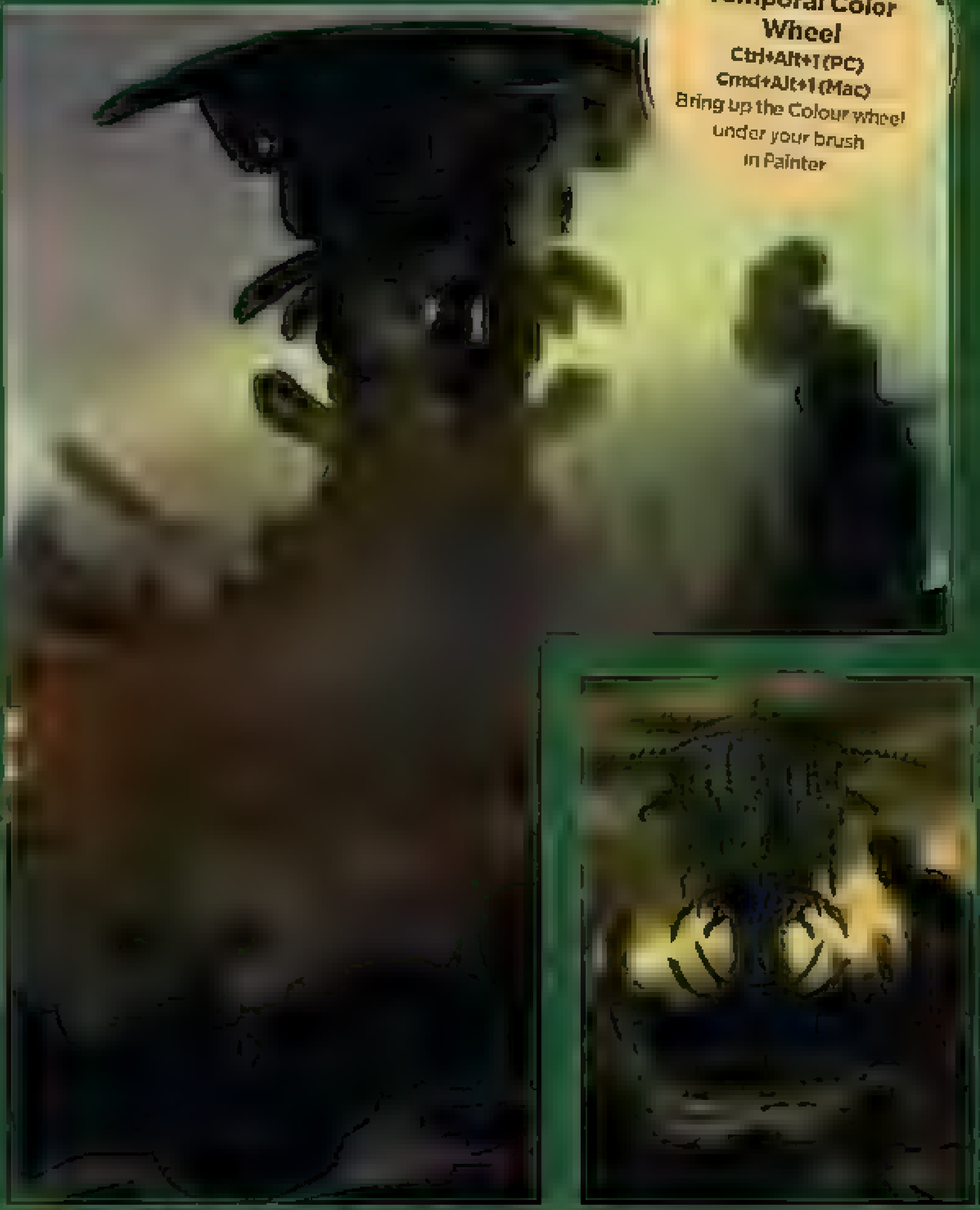
One of the most useful elements of Painter's custom palettes is the ability to add commands such as Save and New layer. Choose Window> Custom palette>Add command. Then pick the palette you wish to add the command to, and select a command. Repeat this action until you've added all the commands you use

Shortcuts

Temporal Color Wheel

Ctrl+Alt+1 (PC)
Cmd+Alt+1 (Mac)

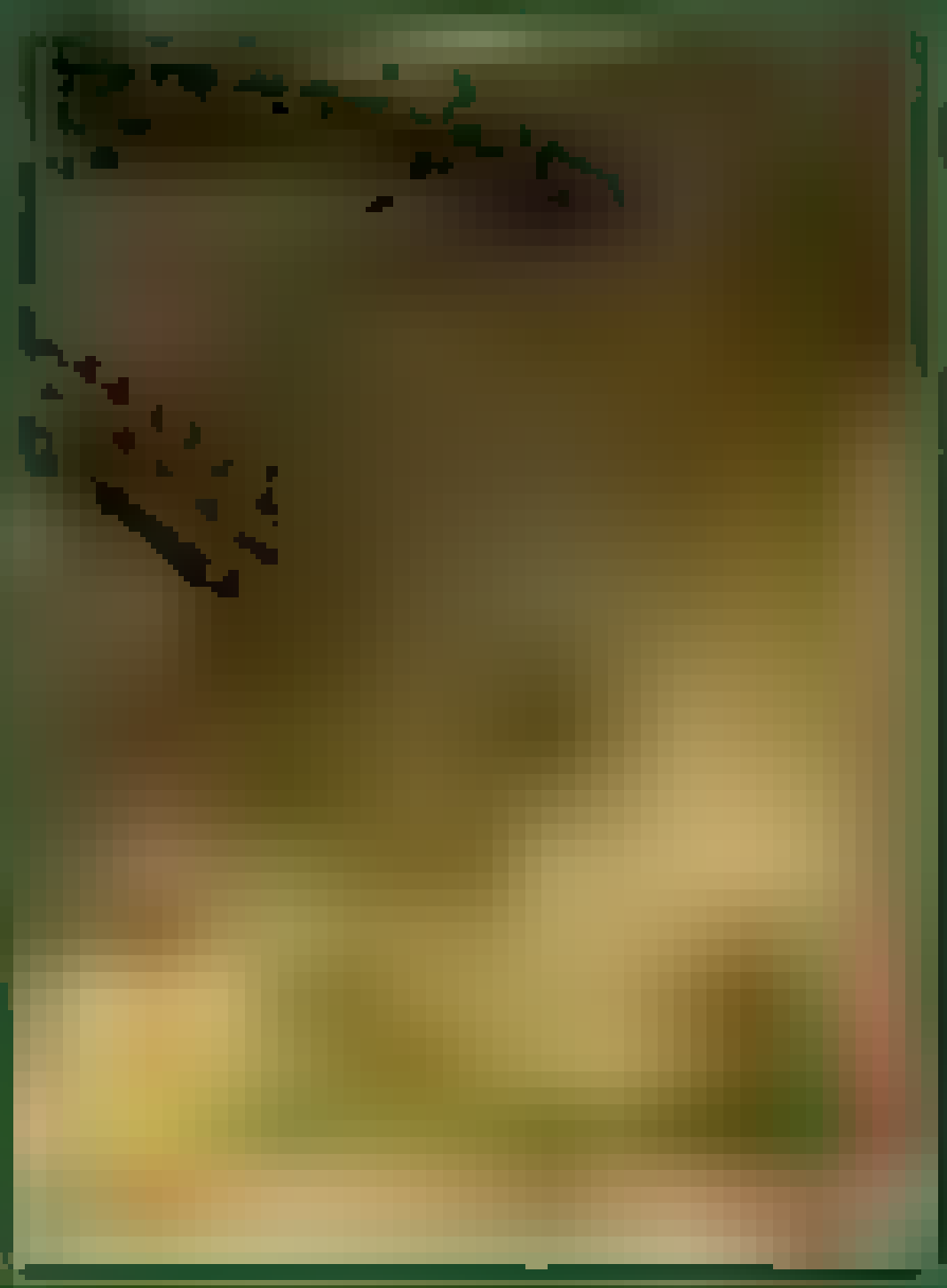
Bring up the Colour wheel under your brush in Painter



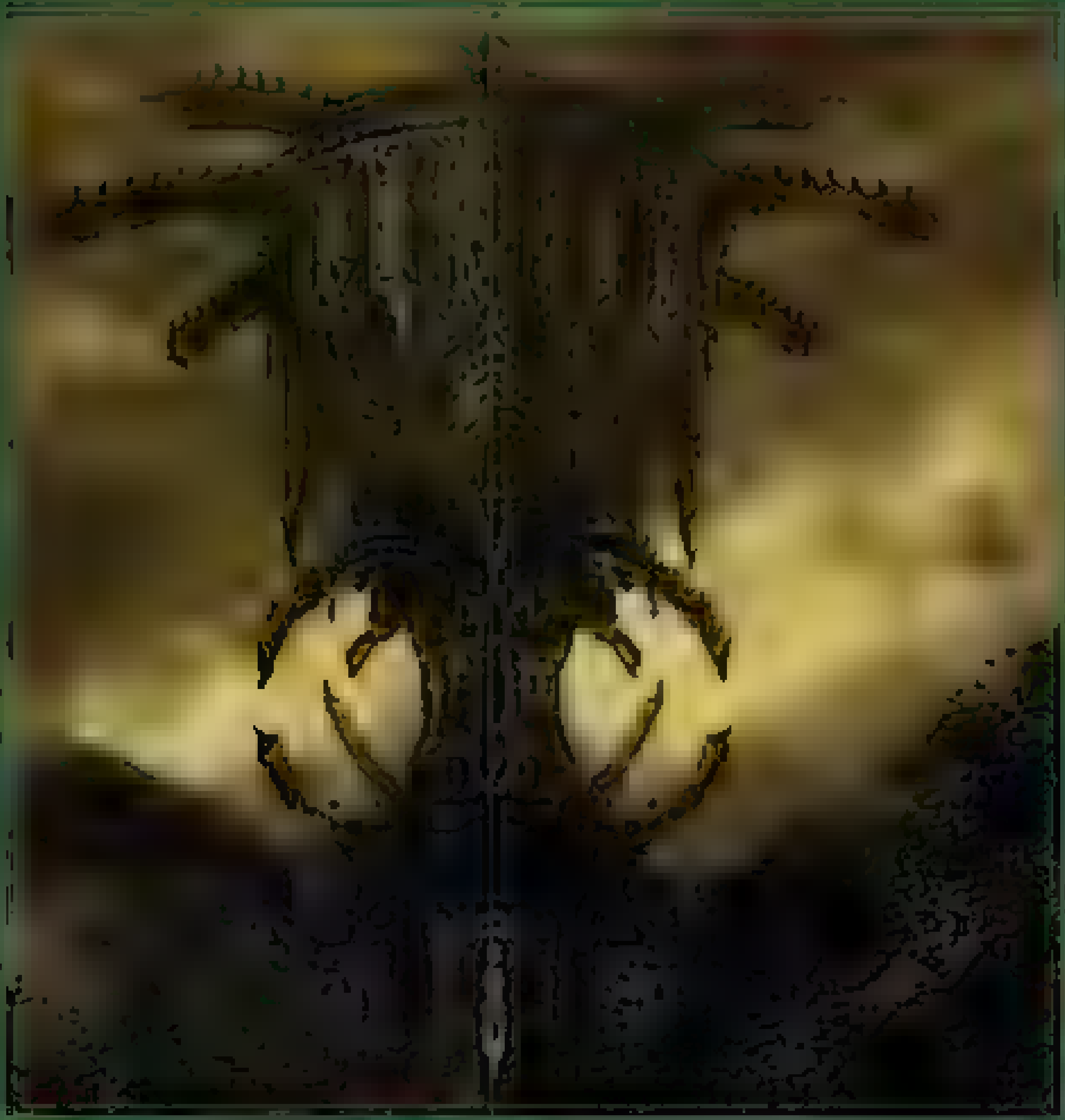
4 Approaching the tower

I use a 2D image from the SketchUp model. I position the Mirror tool centrally and start drawing on a new layer using the model as a guide. I avoid adding lighting and shadows, because I want to light the tower non-symmetrically. The Mirror and Kaleidoscope tools have made the need to paste halves and fractions together redundant.

5 The weather forecast



I start painting the cloudy and oppressive sky. If I can nail the atmosphere then the painting of the tower will become easier. I always recommend painting from back to front; this way, all the elements will merge together as a whole. For the sky, I use a combination of my own custom cloud brush and some of the blending brushes. The tower drawing is on a separate layer at this point.

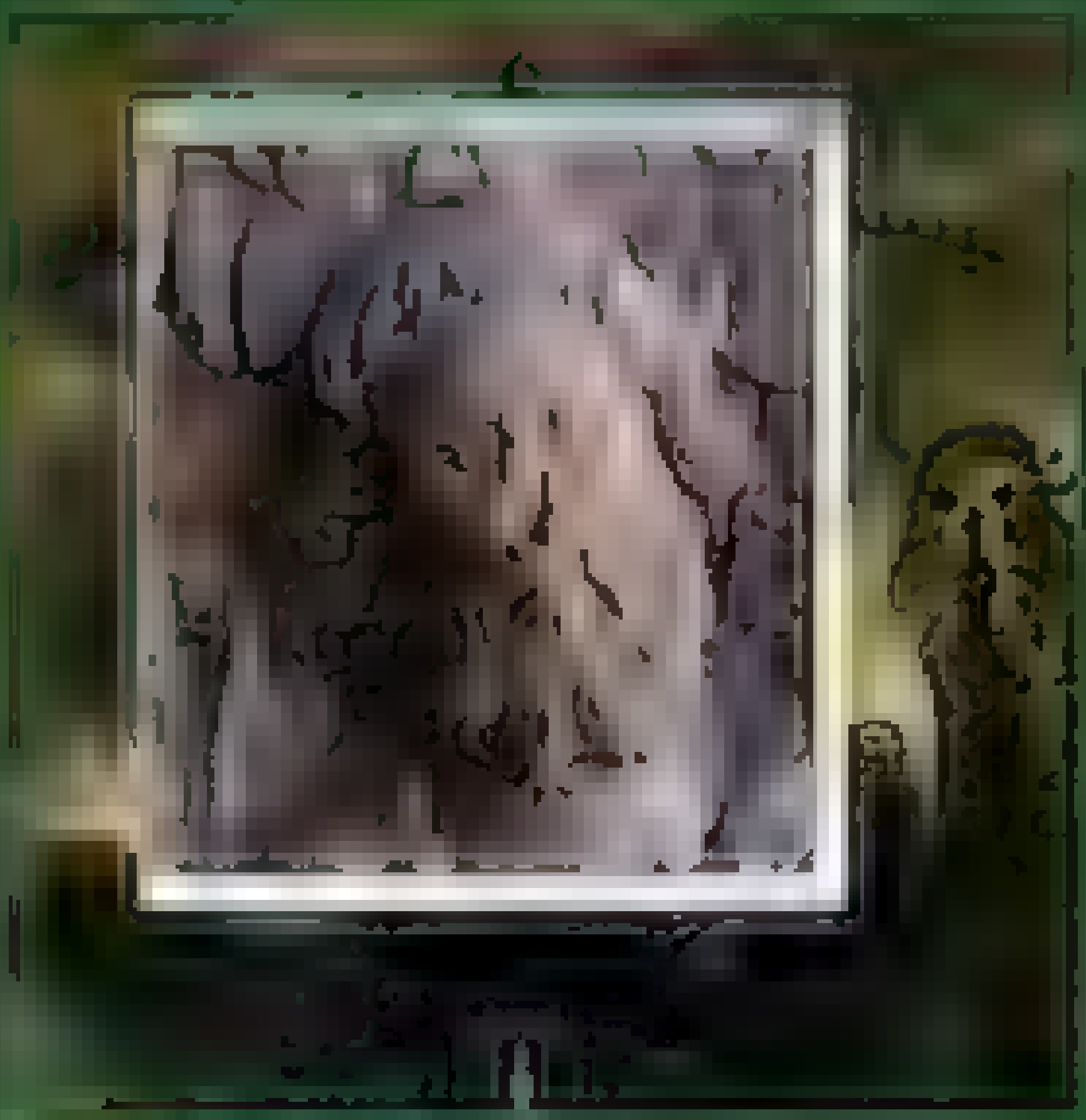


6 Mirrored painting

Having painted the window earlier, I have an idea of the texture and feel of the material that the tower is made from. I use the Mirror tool again, but as I paint I'm conscious of the need to add specific light to different sides. Taking my cue from the sky, I want light to be hitting the right underside. Having rendered most of the tower, I turn off Mirror and start to apply light and shadow to specific areas.

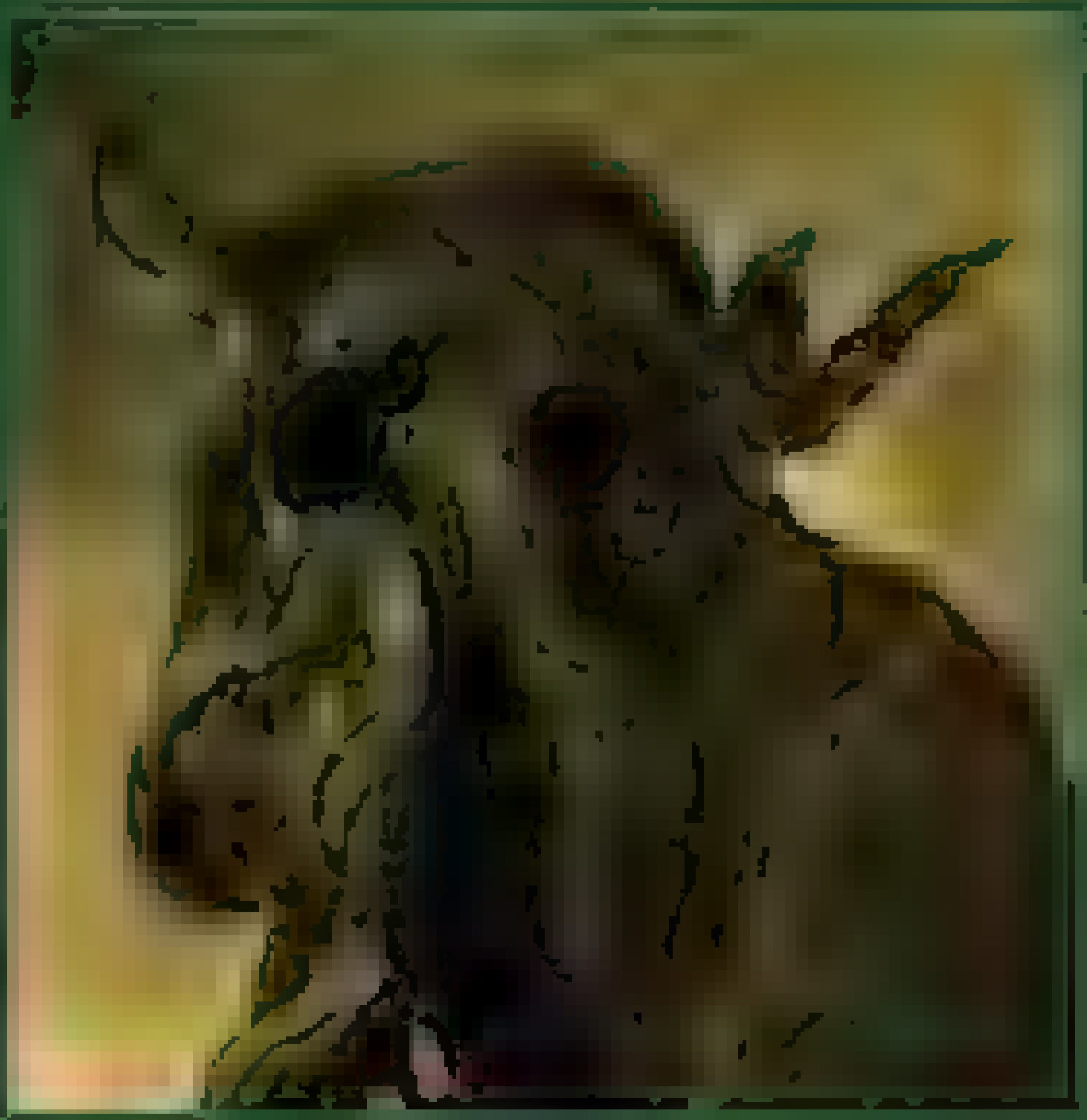
7 iPad sketching

I've just bought an iPad and am using Sketchbook Pro. I sketch out a quick image that happens to solve the placement of the tower. I always find that problems are solved more quickly if you're not looking for a solution, but just having fun. Using the Sketchbook image as a template, I adjust the composition of my final to reflect the sketch. I want to add an avenue of twisted statues leading up to the tower.



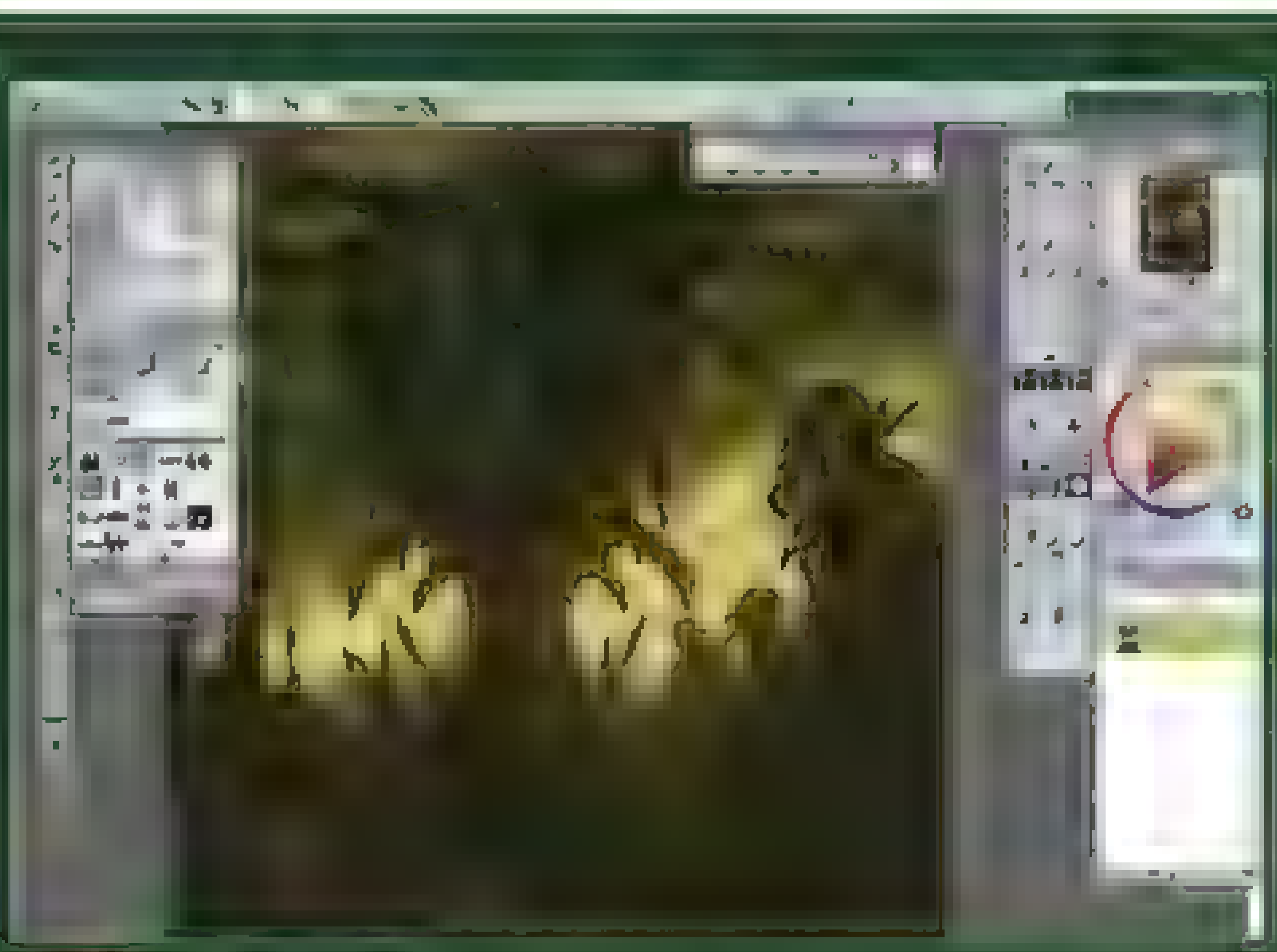
8 Carry a camera

The ability to gather your own reference is invaluable. My reference is pretty much geared to my personality. I find that sooner or later any pictures I take will find a home in my work. That was the case with these images of carved wooden effigies taken from Berkeley Castle. These images give me exactly the right inspiration to illustrate the statues lining the path to the tower.



9 Less is more

Using the bearded carving as inspiration, I carve away sections of its face. I create dark sockets and remove parts of the jaw and beard to create an unsettling vision. I build the texture using the opaque Acrylic brushes and some of Painter's new Gel brushes. There are so many ways to achieve the same effect. Most of the painting takes place in the mind rather than on the [illegible]

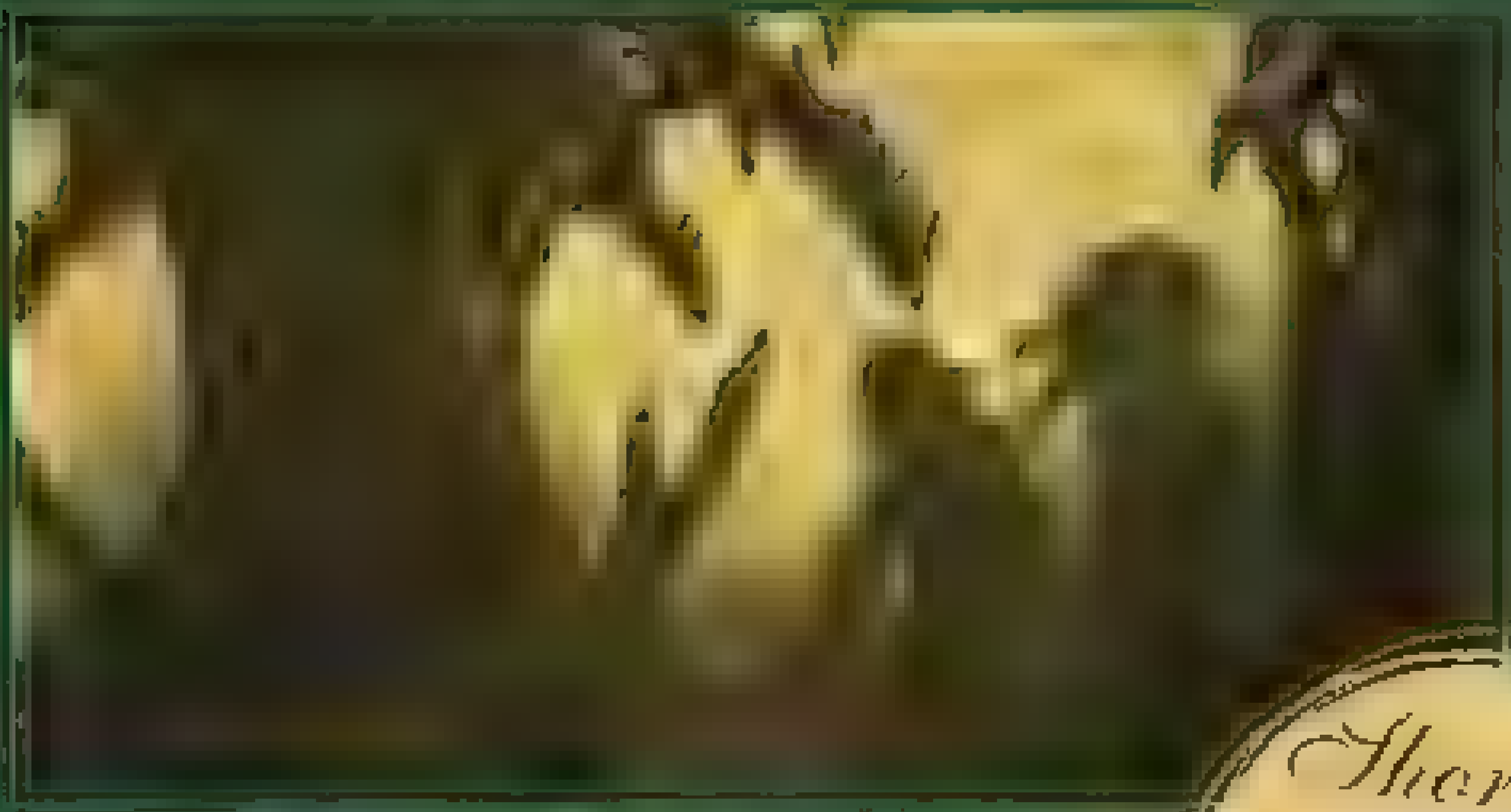


10 Adding distance

I need to push the tower back a bit. Atmospheric perspective kicks in with distance. Highlights become darker and darks become lighter. Using a Lighten layer I use an Airbrush to paint over the darker areas of the tower. With the new Temporal Color Picker I select a colour lighter than the darkest areas and paint liberally over the tower. Using a Lighten layer mode will ensure that lighter areas won't be affected.

11 Blurring the distance

To increase the distance I use a Diffusion brush from the Tinting library to blur elements of the tower, especially near the brightest light sources. The Mirror tool is perfect for balancing the diffusion across the image. I add another layer set to Overlay, eyedrop the sky and paint over the tower, creating a colour bloom. I'm trying to replicate the optical effect when viewing a silhouette against a bright background.



12 The approach

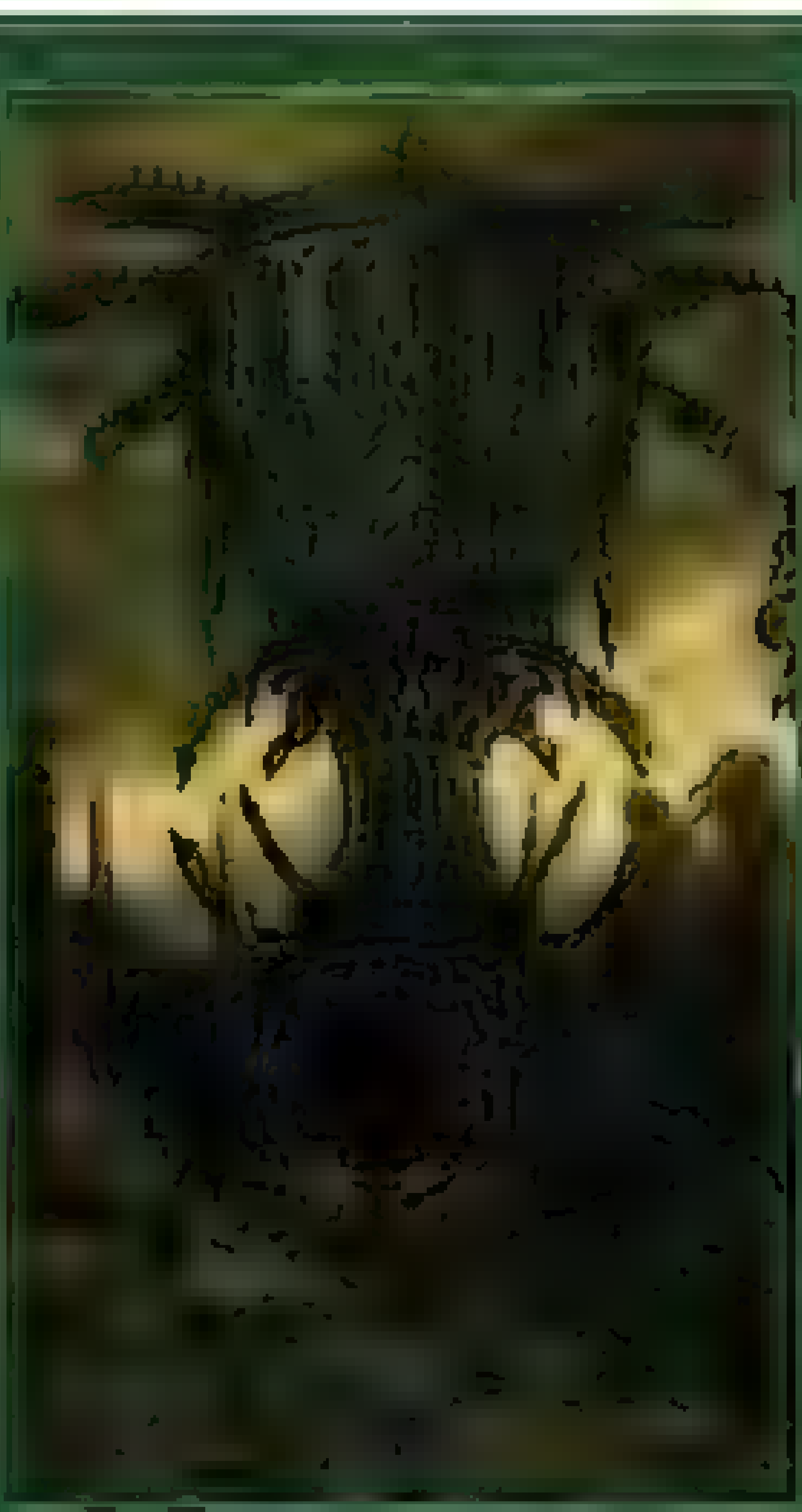
I set up the Mirror tool again to paint a protective wall. I'm thinking about the corruption in the tower and that the entrance should reflect this. I want the entrance in the wall to resemble a sewer storm drain. A circular entrance could provide a 360-degree offensive; the Kaleidoscope tool is useful in depicting circular entrances, in this case the distance makes details redundant, but use the tool as the image dictates.

Shortcut
Adjust the canvas
Space+Alt (PC & Mac)
Rotate your Painter 12 canvas to a comfortable drawing angle.

PRO SECRETS

Organise your photo library

Not only will doing this save you time, but a tidier reference collection will enhance your creative experience. Google's Picasa enables you to add multiple descriptive tags to your images for easy access. No more trawling through albums, looking for [illegible] rusty textures

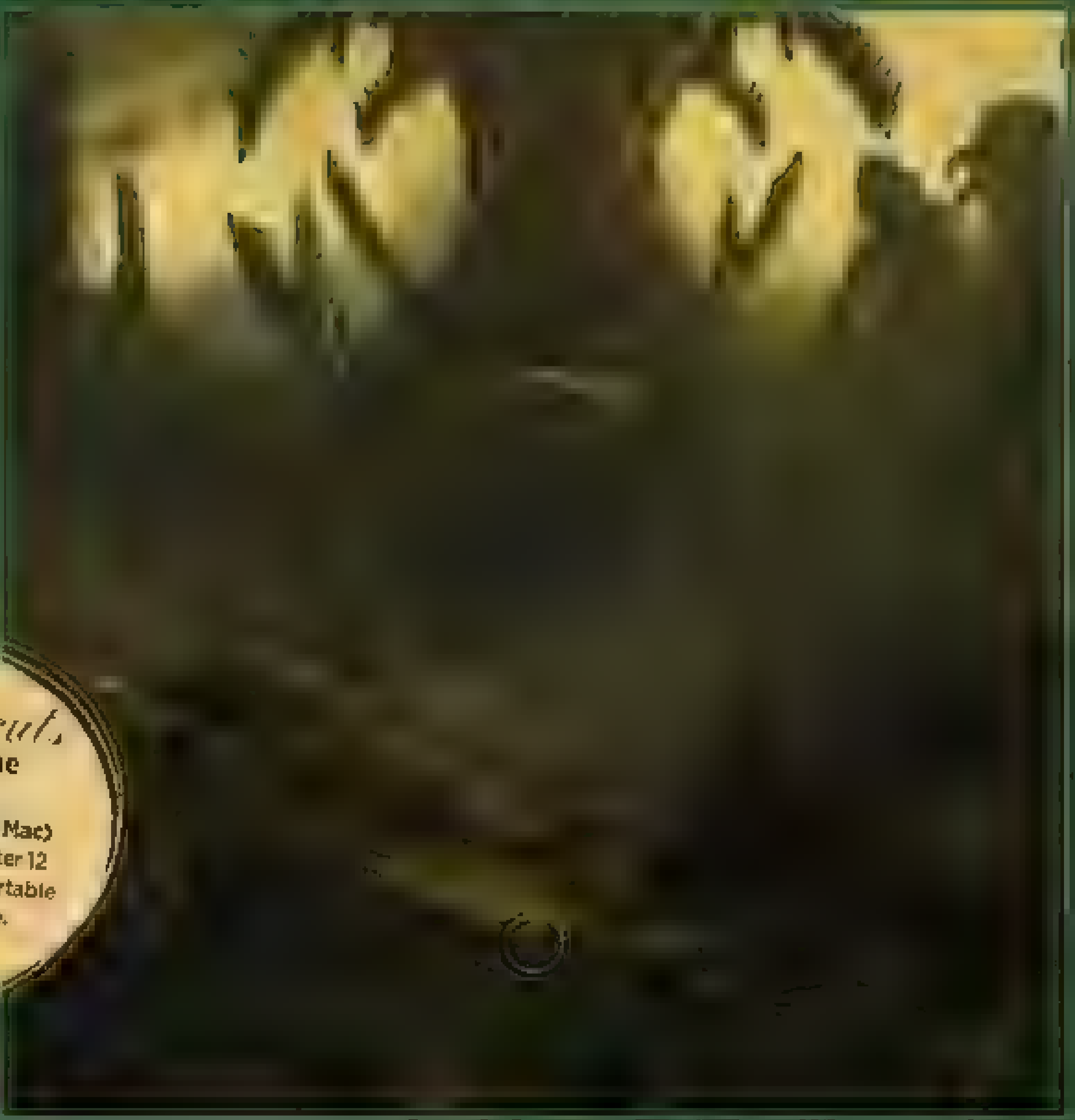


13 The foreground

I've always wanted a plane of rubble and scree at the tower's approach, imagining that earthquakes have scarred this region and sent some of the statues to ruin. I hint at another ruined face among the rubble on the left. With the rocks I rough them out using large chalk and palette knife brushes, only adding details towards the end and once again keep an eye on the lighting and values. This area of the painting is likely to contain some of the greatest contrast.

14 Lighting the way

I want to lead the viewer's eye into the picture so I create a path of light through the rubble to the circular entrance in the wall. It's hopefully the path that the eye will follow. Adding a lighter passage at the top of the sewer entrance also directs the eye onto the tower. I ensure that the lighting makes sense in regard to the image.



15 A personal touch

I still feel there isn't quite enough scale in the image and decide to add a solitary warrior. Looking at the axe it could be Frazetta's Death Dealer himself. I take the image into Photoshop to adjust the Curves, but after a little experimentation I realise that the Color Balances I executed earlier meant I'm happy with the final mood and atmosphere. Although I am finished for now, I'll definitely be revisiting this piece again.

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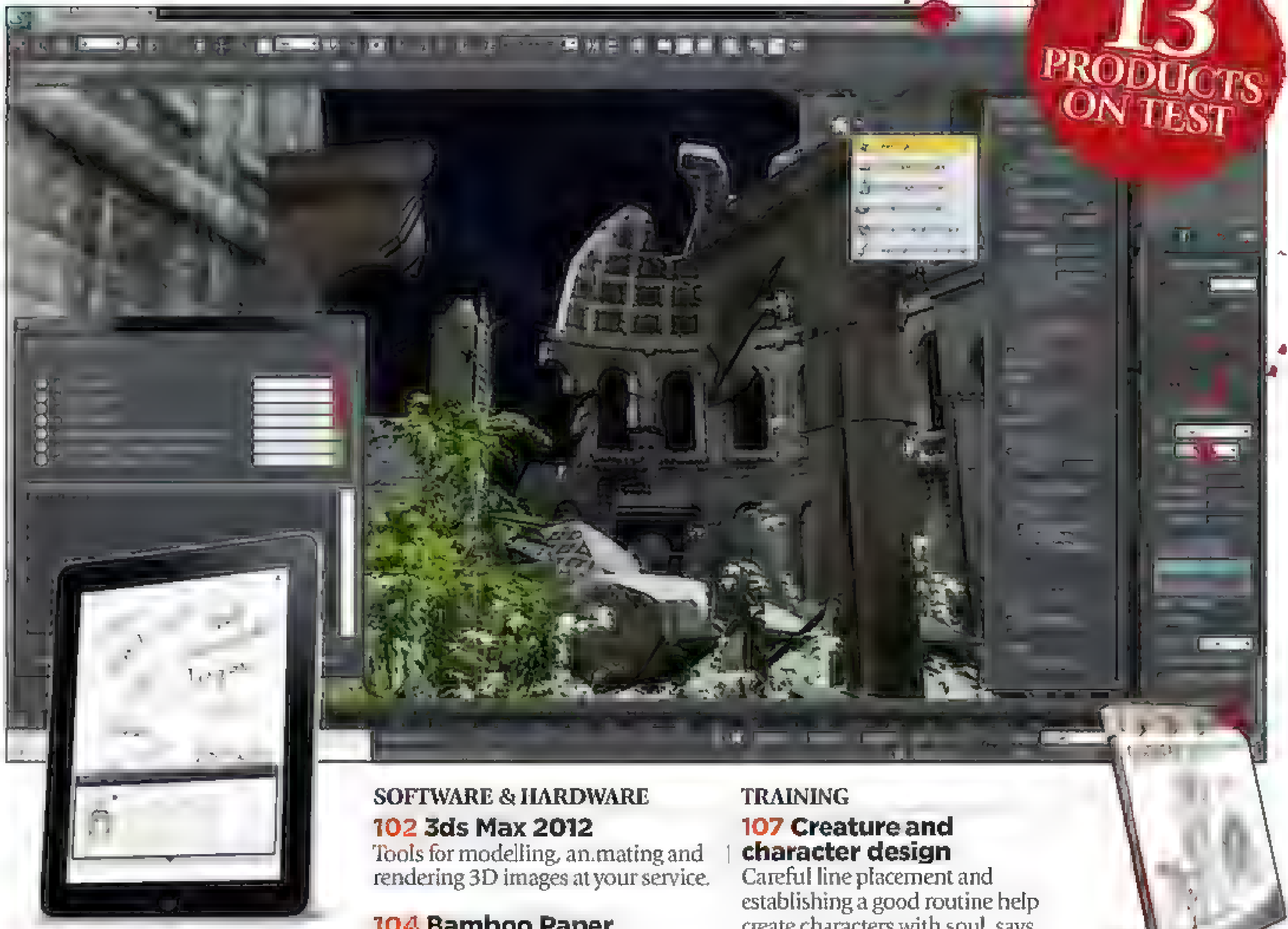
ImagineFX Reviews

Artist's Choice Award
Software and hardware with a five-star rating receives the FX Artist's Choice award

The latest digital art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team…

13 PRODUCTS ON TEST



SOFTWARE & HARDWARE

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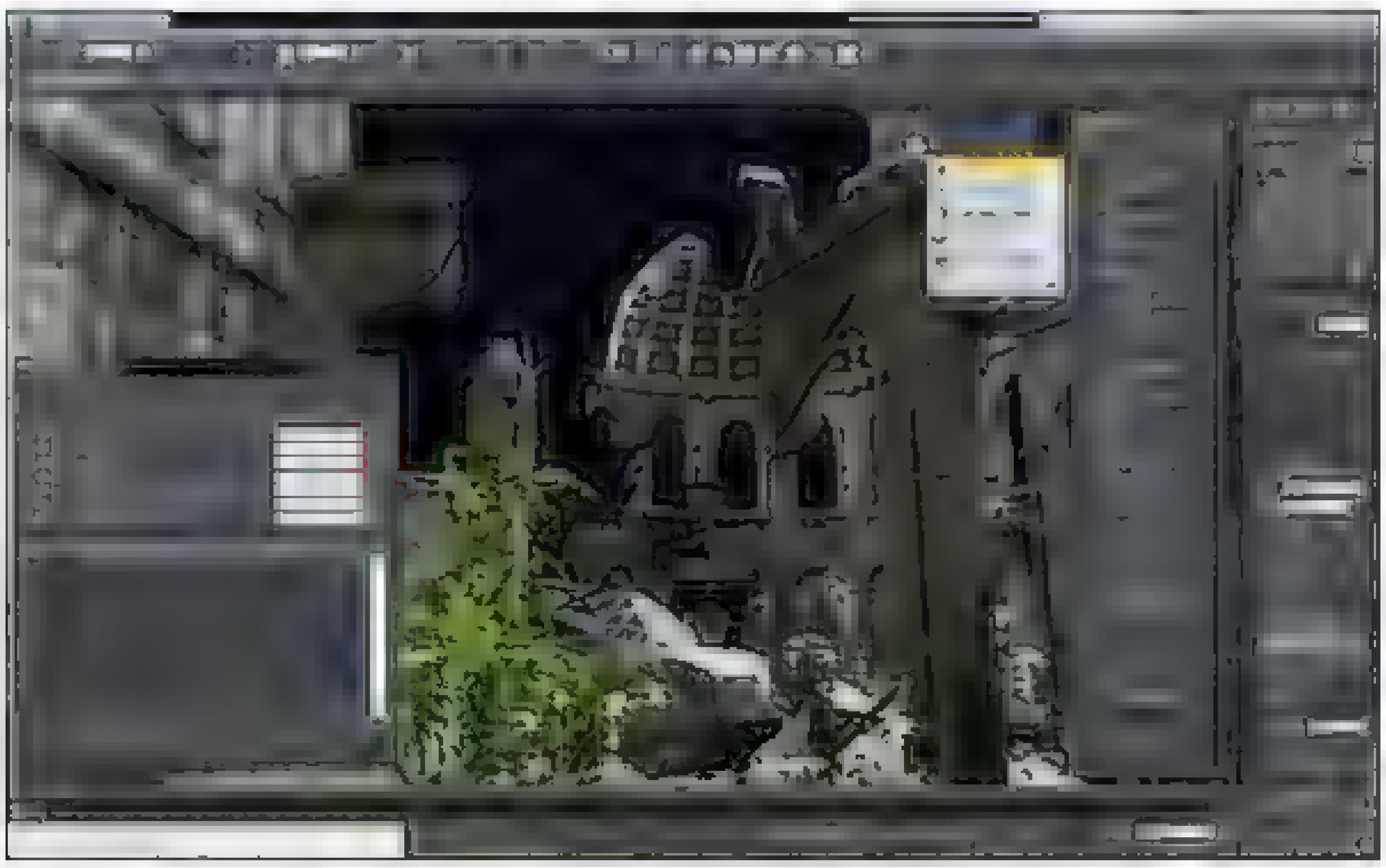
RATINGS EXPLAINED ✎✎✎✎✎ Magnificent ✎✎✎✎ Good ✎✎✎ Ordinary ✎✎ Poor ✎ Atrocious

3ds Max 2012

PC ONLY

ULTIMATE 3D The world's most powerful modelling, animation and rendering suite takes another step forward

Price **Company** Autodesk **Web** **Contact**

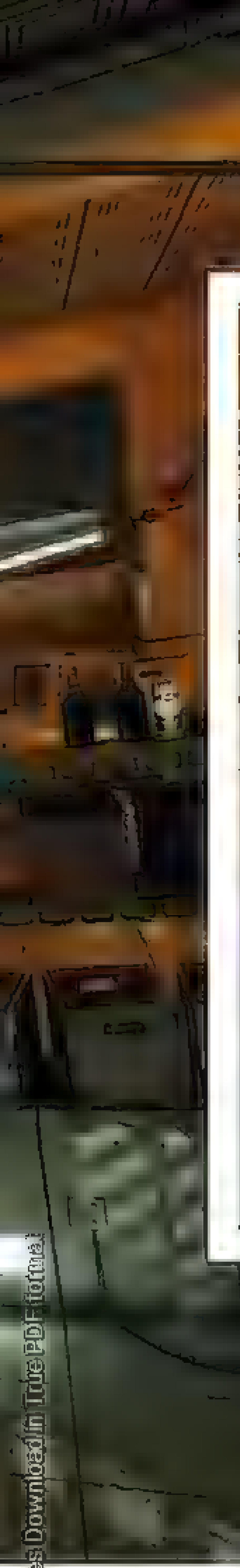


There's a big focus on performance in the mighty 3ds Max 2012 and it includes a faster, simpler system for simulating how objects move and collide. The software is also capable of greater realism

The Apartment is a piece Rob Watkins did for fun, inspired by Ridley Scott's Blade Runner and rendered and textured in 3ds Max

Welcome to the big league. Despite a healthy choice of highly capable 3D suites, 3ds Max is the biggest and baddest of them all, with an overwhelming array of production-honed tools for modelling, animating and rendering. It's also a major investment for any artist or studio (although eligible students enjoy a big discount).

The 2012 edition is the fifth to emerge under Autodesk's regime of annual updates, which are as regular as clockwork. It's a system designed for studios that need access to the latest technology to stand out in a competitive field. There's a big focus on performance in 3ds Max 2012 – everything feels snappier from starting



This steampunk engine shed was a design Rob did for Fable III. "I only really got to finish it properly after the game was released," he says.

up onwards, while the new Nitrous graphics system gives a more responsive and detailed representation of your scene in the viewport.

The new iray system is added to 3ds Max's already powerful rendering options. Created by mental images, the company behind the acclaimed mental ray render engine in 3ds Max, iray offers a simpler way to achieve high-quality results. You don't need to fiddle endlessly with settings boxes – just set up the surface materials you want and sit back. Compared to mental ray, it seems capable of greater realism overall, with more subtlety in shadows for example. There's also a new framework for [illegible] preset render styles such as a coloured pencil look. This is probably not something to use for a final image, but it's ideal for quickly establishing a visual style in the early stages.

Animators will welcome mRigids, a new system for setting up dynamics where objects in your scene interact realistically as they move and touch each other. It's more or less a direct swap for 3ds Max's previous Reactor system, with the benefits of simpler set-up and faster calculations.

The basic proposition behind 3ds Max hasn't changed behind these and the many other refinements in this release. It's a behemoth of a program and is certainly not for everyone. However, it's got the power to reward your investment of money and time by enabling you to create compelling artwork and animations.

> “Everything feels snappier, while the new Nitrous graphics system is more responsive and detailed”

DETAILS

Features

[illegible]

System Requirements

[illegible]

Rating

[illegible]

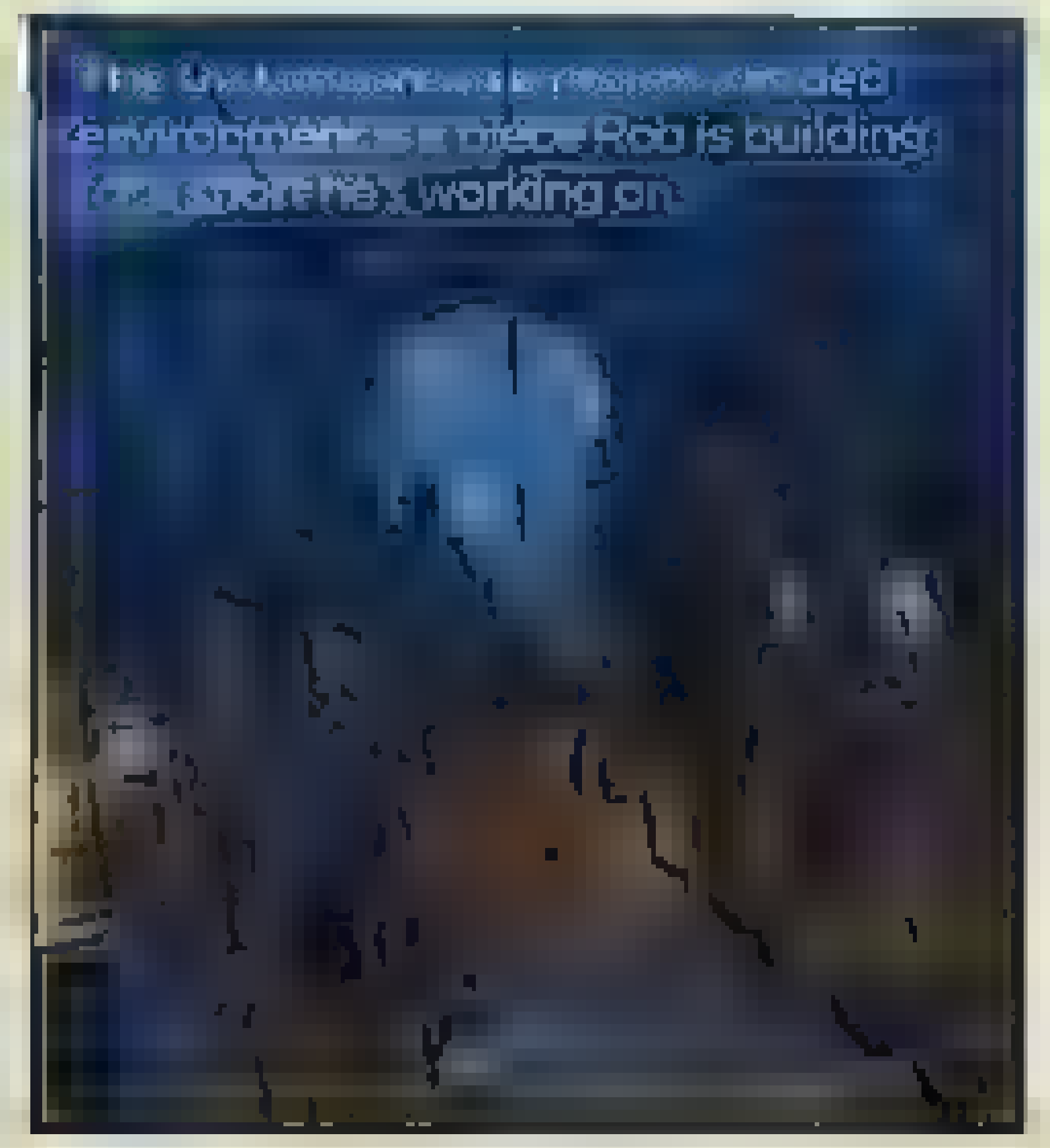
ROB WATKINS

Why this games artist turns to 3ds Max for work and pleasure

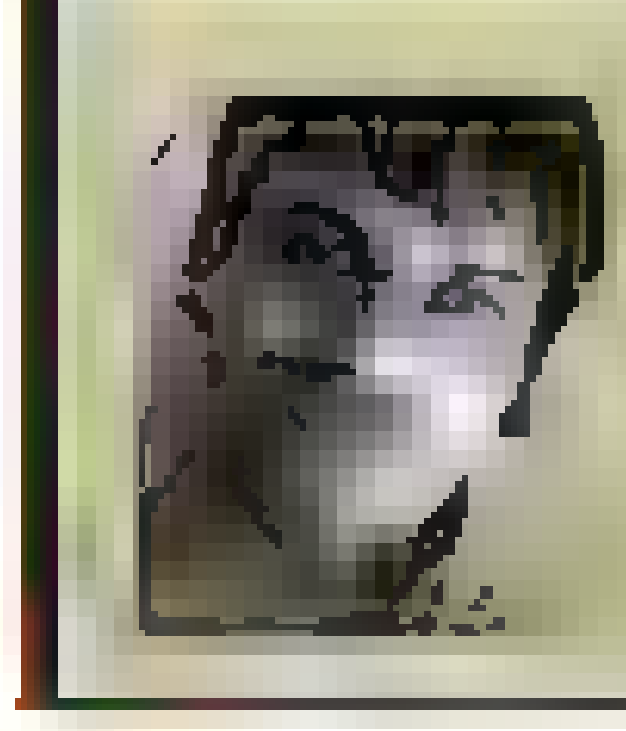
How do you use 3ds Max?
I primarily use Max coupled with the render plug-in VRay for finishing my artwork. I tend to model a lot in either Softimage or Maya, then take the models into Max for texturing and rendering, because it's so easy and quick to get the results I want. I love the simplicity of the Max material editor – maybe it's because I'm old school. It simply does what you want when you plug in a map or texture.

What does 3ds Max help you bring to your artwork?
I couldn't get the results I want as quickly for rendering in Maya or Softimage. Material creation in Max is simple: add the maps you want to use and watch the material update as you go along. I also rate the renderable splines and the Loft tool, which saves me cutting up the geometry in other packages for unwrapping before painting.

What advice would you offer to newcomers to 3ds Max?
It's the easiest software to grasp for a beginner. It doesn't expect you to be a pro straight away and the interface is easier to navigate, especially the rendering and material settings. The Edit Poly tools are fantastic for creating good base meshes, and the primitive tools are easy to start using straight out of the box.

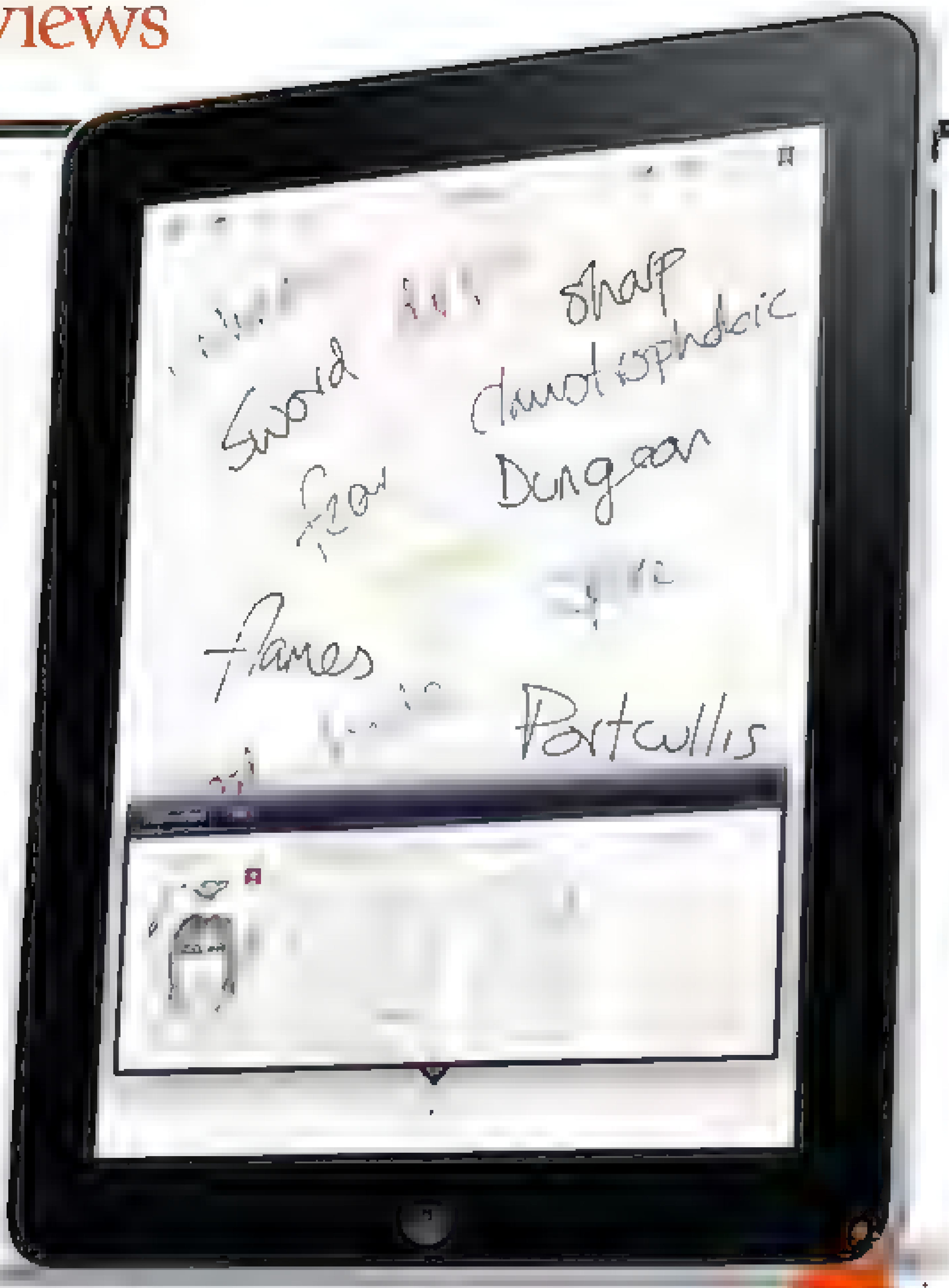


The [illegible] environment piece Rob is building for [illegible] he's working on



Rob helped design the Fable universe from Fable I to Fable III, and is lead environment artist at Splash Damage

wokesworld.com



As you add more pages to your notebook, you can find your way around easily thanks to the thumbnail view

Bamboo Paper

iPad

BROUGHT TO BOOK When inspiration strikes, you need to get your ideas down. Enter Wacom's sketchbook app.

Price £1.19 **Company** Wacom **Web** **Contact**

Despite its lack of pressure-sensitivity, the iPad's still a popular tool for digital artists – both for full-scale painting and as a sketchbook for doodling and making notes. It's this second use that Wacom's Bamboo Paper app is aimed at. Designed to feel like a traditional side-bound notebook, you flick the lower corners of the screen as you would paper pages, and can rotate the iPad without your work flipping between portrait and landscape orientations. It's a shame the controls along the top and bottom don't rotate to match the way you're holding the iPad.

While it initially feels similar to the popular Penultimate app, the lag when you draw is noticeably less in Bamboo Paper, and we like the way it smoothes the edges of your lines slightly better. While there are just three pen thicknesses, the faster you move your stylus, the thinner the line. It also attempts to interpret and ignore accidental input when you rest your hand on the screen while drawing.

The eraser is speed-sensitive too, getting thicker the faster you move. Frustratingly, though, even at its thinnest the eraser's chunky to say the least, and because it's hard-edged the tool feels clumsy when altering fine lines. These aren't our only quibbles. It seems needlessly restrictive to be confined to a single notebook and six-colour palette, although Wacom told us it's planning to lift both limitations in future versions. We also found that the 20-step undo feature only works if you don't swap pages.

When you're done, you can email the notebook as a PDF or individual pages as PNG files. These can also be saved to your iPad's Camera Roll (again as PNG), from where they can be copied to your computer to import into your software of choice. However, the images have Bamboo Paper branding at the bottom and are on a slightly off-white background.

The annoyances should be ironed out in forthcoming versions, but this is already an excellent and responsive app for making sketches and notes.

DETAILS

Features

- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- Export pages as PNG
- Email entire book as [illegible]
- [illegible]

System Requirements

[illegible]

Rating

---

iPad

Wacom Bamboo Stylus

CASH IN HAND Does a stylus from Wacom justify the high price?

Price £30
Company Wacom
Web wacom.eu
RATING

There are a fair few iPhone and iPad styluses available now, so a newcomer – especially one as costly as this – is going to have to be extra special to carve out a niche for itself. But as you'd hope with something from Wacom, this stylus is rather good.

While it doesn't contain any fancy tech to give pressure sensitivity while you're drawing, the finesse is in the design. Built to feel like a pencil in your hand, it's beautifully light yet with just the right amount of additional weight at the nib end to give you consistent contact with the iPad while you're working. As you move the rubber tip over the screen, the motion is smooth, although there's a smidgen more resistance between the two surfaces than we'd have liked.

At 6mm across, the nib's as small as can be used on the iPad or iPhone, and feels more precise than chunkier competitors. It's exchangeable too, so there may yet be other variants available in the future. And to use the pen at a lower angle – perhaps to shade – remove the metal cylinder around the tip. Unorthodox, but it works a treat.

Although it's aimed at the iPad and iPhone, the Bamboo Stylus will work on any capacitive touch screen.

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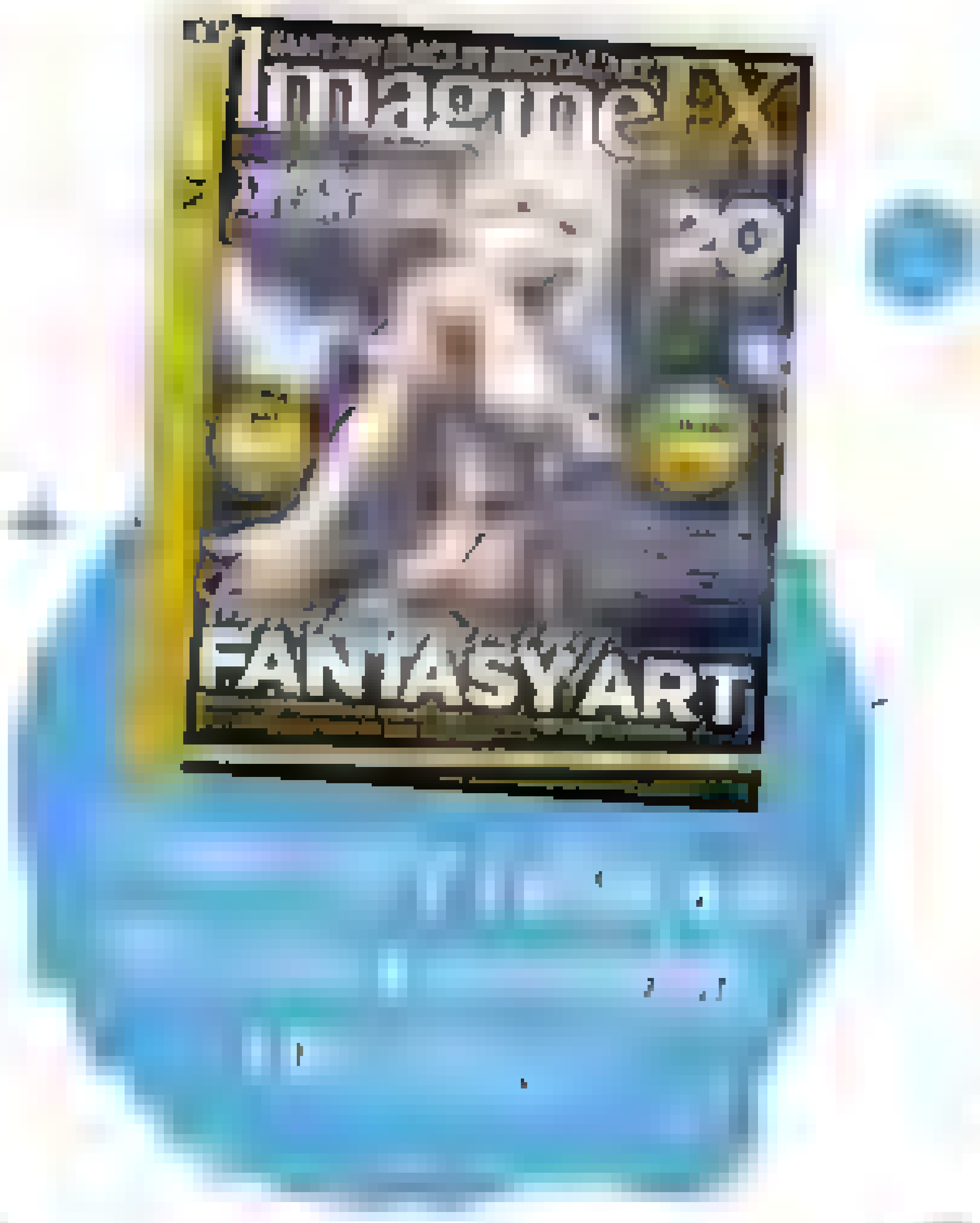
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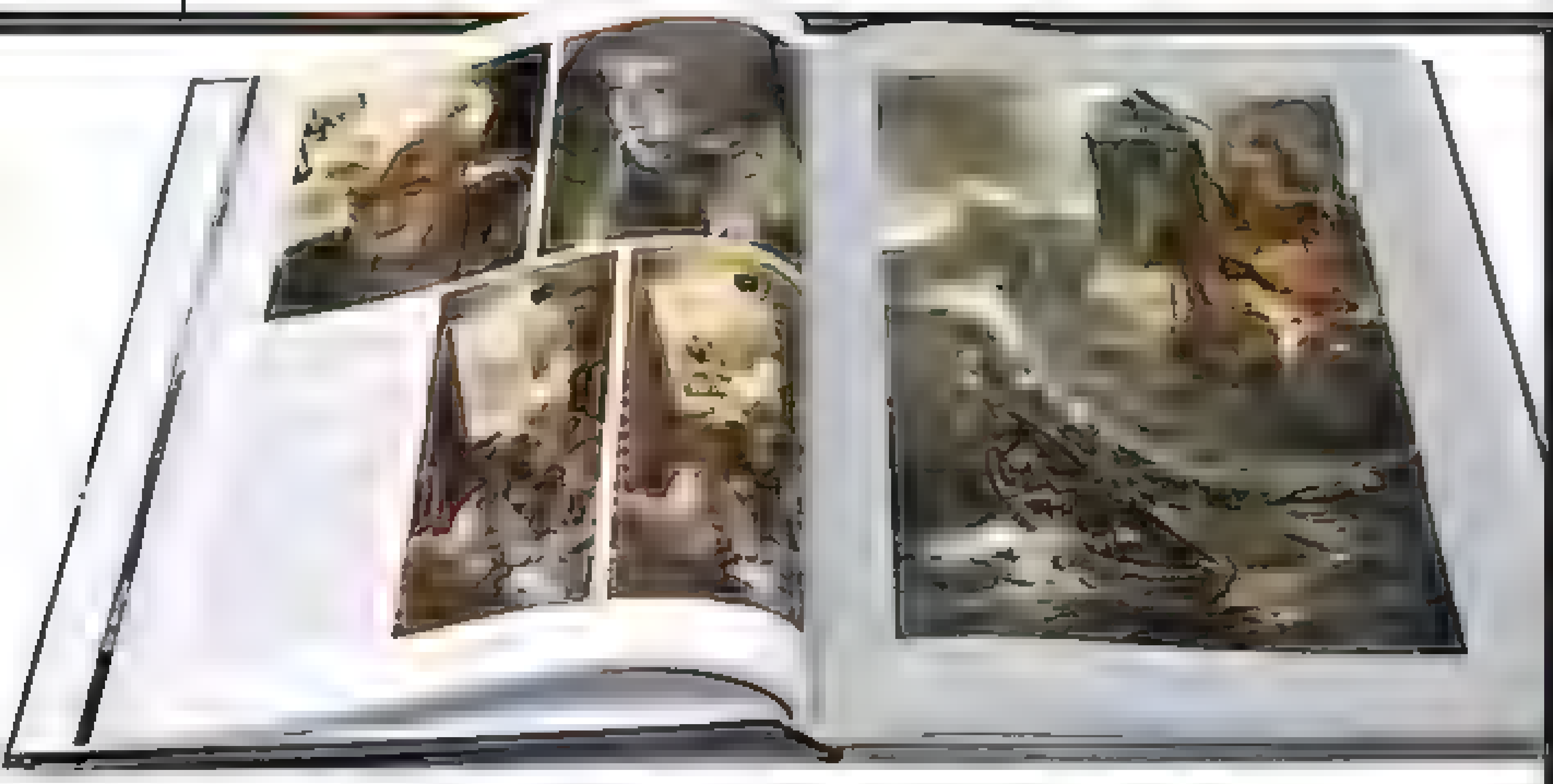


Digital Art Masters Volume 6

TOP 50 The latest volume follows in the footsteps of its predecessors, overflowing with talent and value

Editor **Publisher** **Price**
Web **Available**

Originally launched in 2005, the Digital Art Masters series is still going strong with its latest release. Volume 6 doesn't disappoint, continuing the running theme of combining the talents of 50 new and veteran artists to create a portfolio full of top quality artwork.

Images are divided into five categories as per the series' tradition – scene, character, fantasy, sci-fi and cartoons. While there are some beautiful images in the opening chapter on scenes, it doesn't quite live up to the character section, which rightly commands more space than the other categories in the book. This doesn't make the product any less desirable, but it's clear that the scenes section may have been better served had it been placed midway through the edition, allowing the truly stunning character section to open the book with a bang. This second chapter features some amazing pieces of work which are incredibly diverse, images range from photorealistic profiles through to abstract illustrations.

Each section is nicely introduced with a gorgeous full-page piece of digital art accompanied by some encouraging text written by the artist. The layout of the book follows its predecessors' theme, with breakdowns and insightful tips on how the images were achieved that subsequently present many different approaches to method and workflow. That said, it should be noted that the book isn't an in-depth guide. Software used to produce the artworks is occasionally mentioned, as well as a few well-known painting strategies, but it's by no means a manual on how to produce similar images yourself.

The editor has pitched the length of each gallery perfectly. Both the scene and fantasy sections are shorter than the rest, and although both contain beautiful imagery, the remainder completely deserve the extra pages they've been allocated.

One of the most appealing aspects of the series is how well it covers the creation of 2D and 3D art. This edition is no different: the images are spectacular and the text is clear enough not to put people off with detailed technical jargon. It's perfect for beginners looking for help on how to get started right through to professionals just looking for new sources of ideas and exemplar work.

Overall, Digital Art Masters Volume 6 is a great portfolio of work that also conveniently serves as an inspirational piece of reference material.

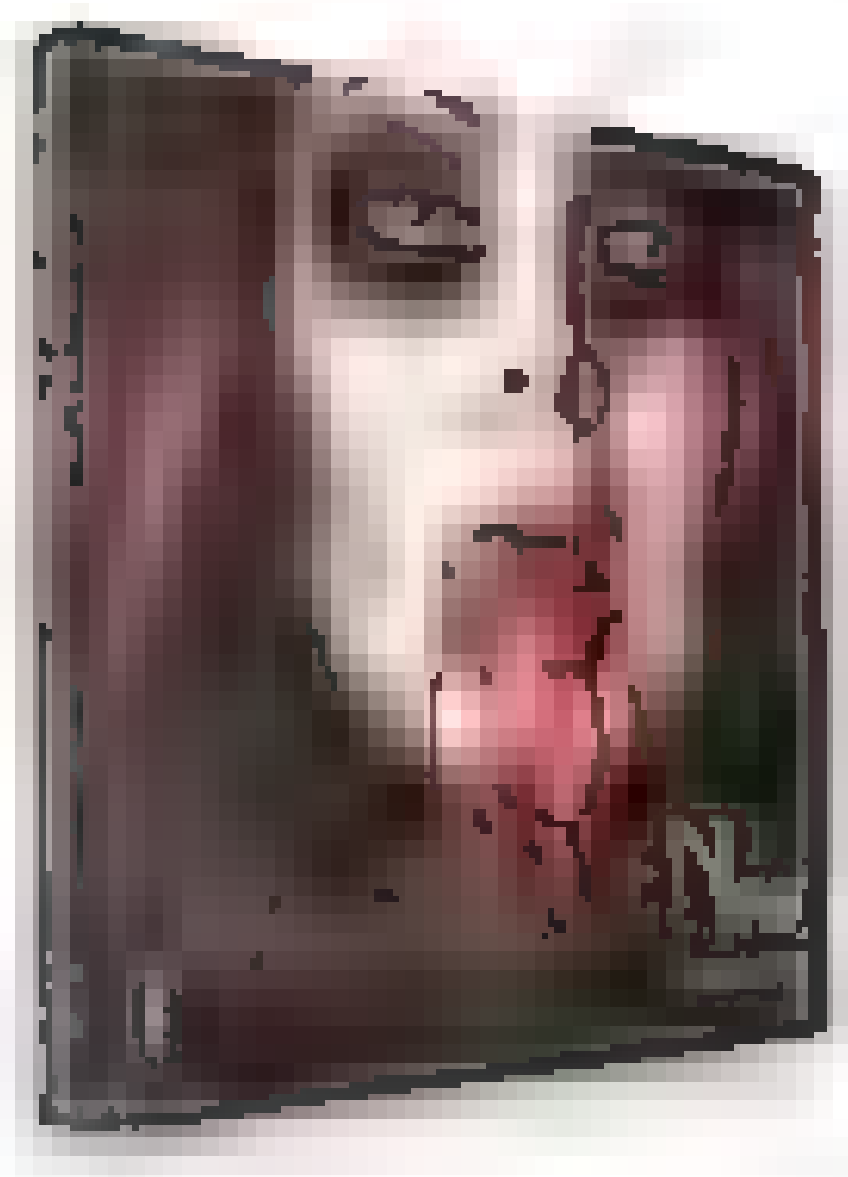
RATING

Further reading…

Some very dark painting and sculpture meets a compendium of fine digital art

Vampire Art Now

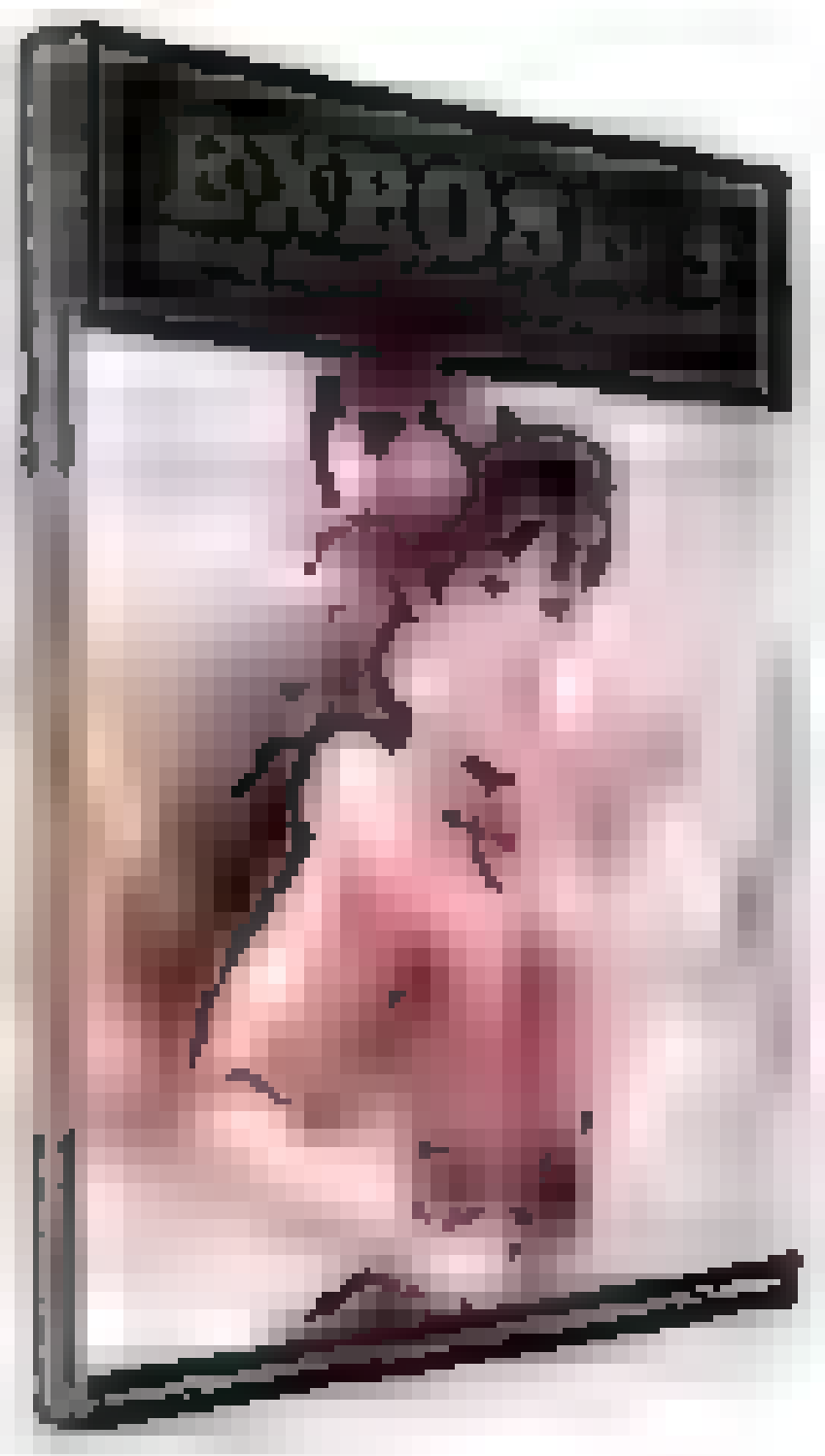
Authors Jasmine Becket-Griffith & Matthew David Becket
Publisher Ilex Press **Price** £20
Available Now
RATING



Vampire Art Now brings together some seriously talented artists in the huge field of undead art. The book is divided into 10 chapters that range from a (mainly) lighthearted cartoon and comics section through to a grisly vampire in the darkroom featuring some truly horrifying images. It includes everything from traditional paintings and prints through to digital art and sculptures, with each image accompanied by a brief note from the artist on the various tricks and techniques they used when producing it. This book's subject may well be an acquired taste – with recent TV series and films winning both fans and enemies – but the fantastic quality of work held within it cannot be argued with. Just don't read it before bedtime.

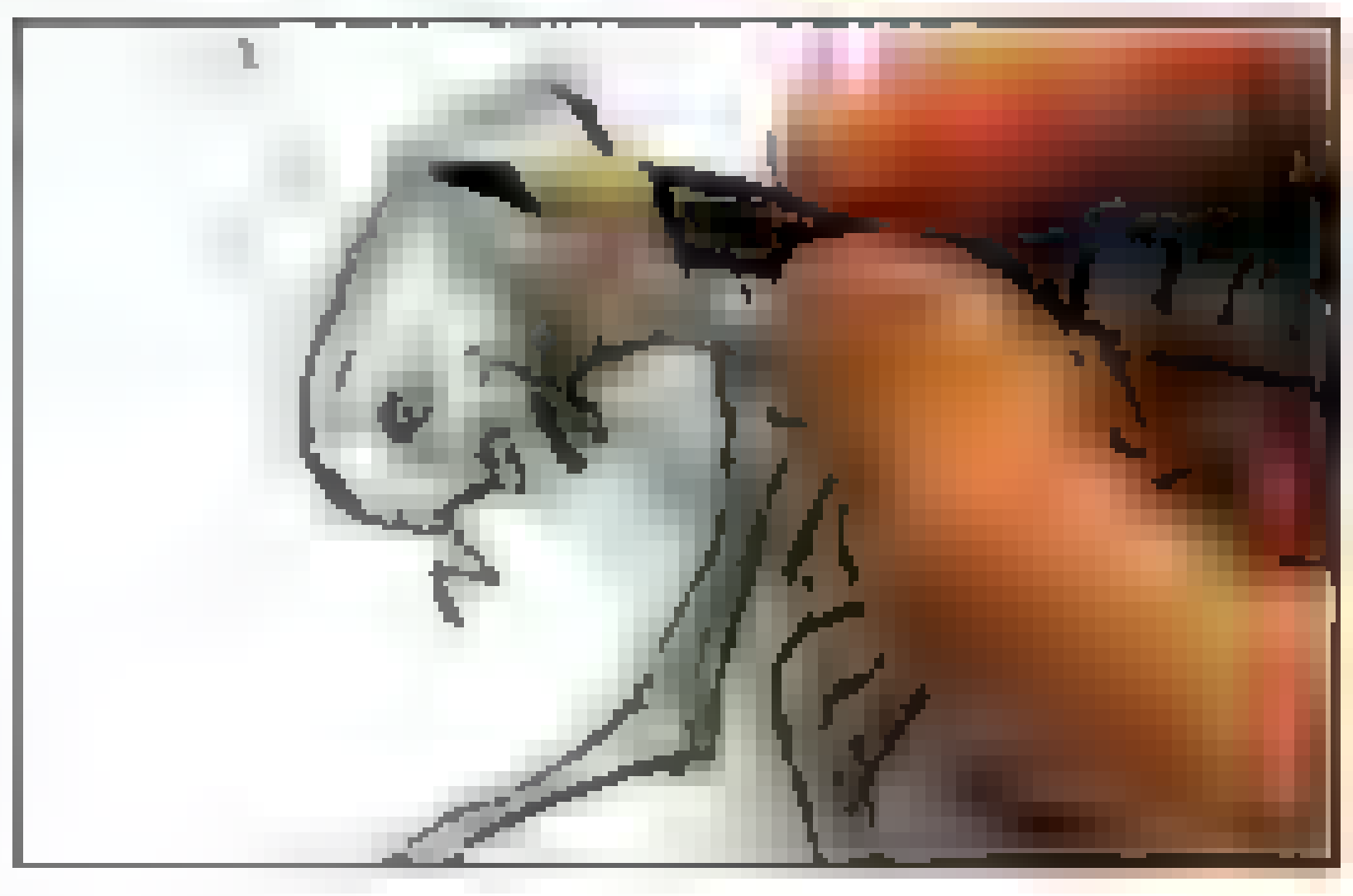
Exposé 9

Editor Daniel Wade
Publisher Ballistic Publishing
Price £43 (paperback) £49 (hardback) **Available** Now
RATING

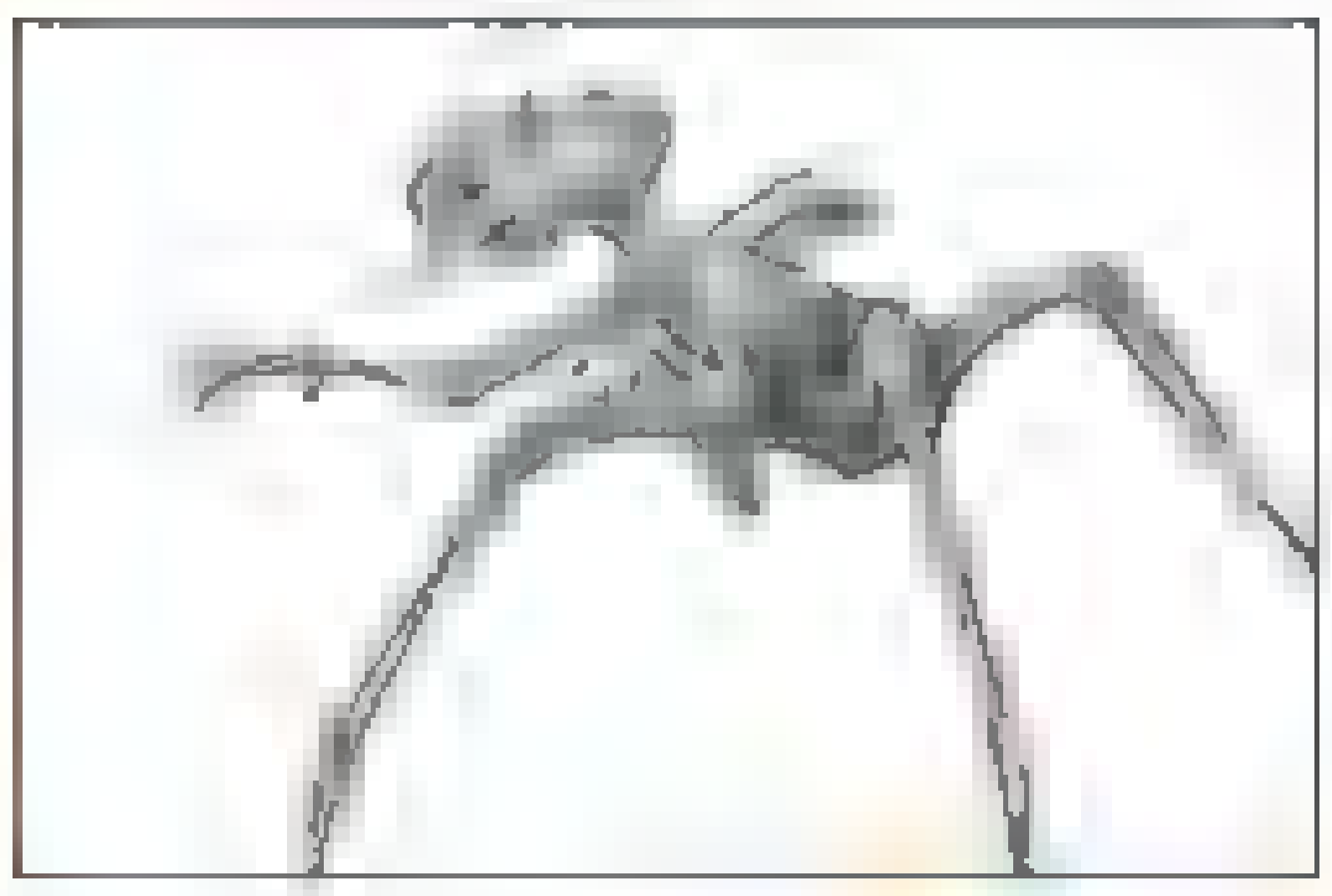


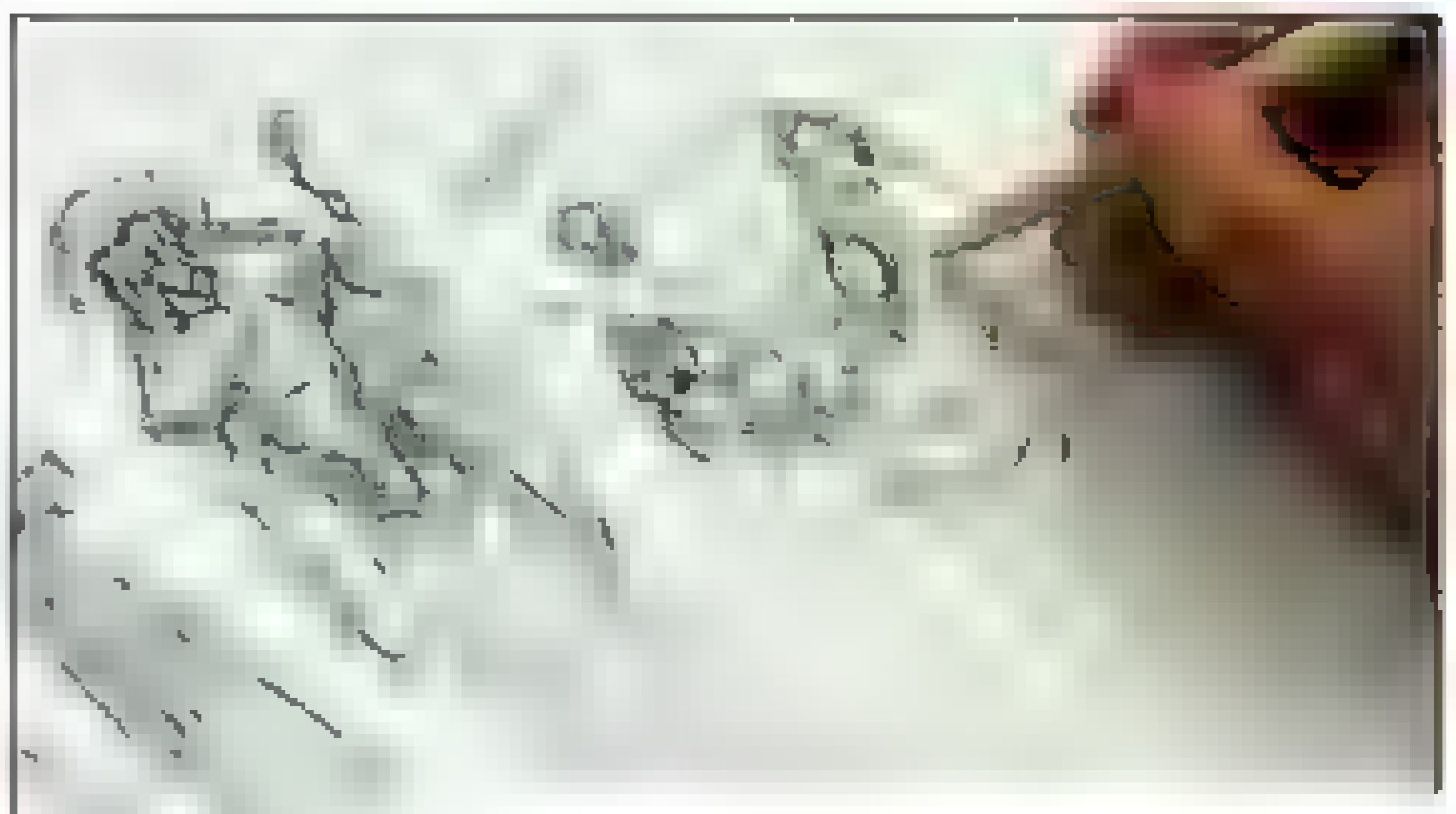
Ballistic Publishing returns with its ninth edition of the "finest digital art in the known universe". A strong statement you might say, but one that's completely upheld by the artwork contained within its pages. With more contributors than ever before, it features over 400 images from the talents of 327 artists from all across the globe. The book has 20 sections, ranging from fantasy femmes to architecture, with the images deemed to be the best commanding more space. Both 2D and CG artists will be very satisfied with the book featuring just the right mix of digital illustrations and 3D modelling to keep everyone happy. A few limited edition leather-bound, gold-embossed copies of the book are also available.

Even a quick scribble can become a compelling design in the hands of Sang Jun.

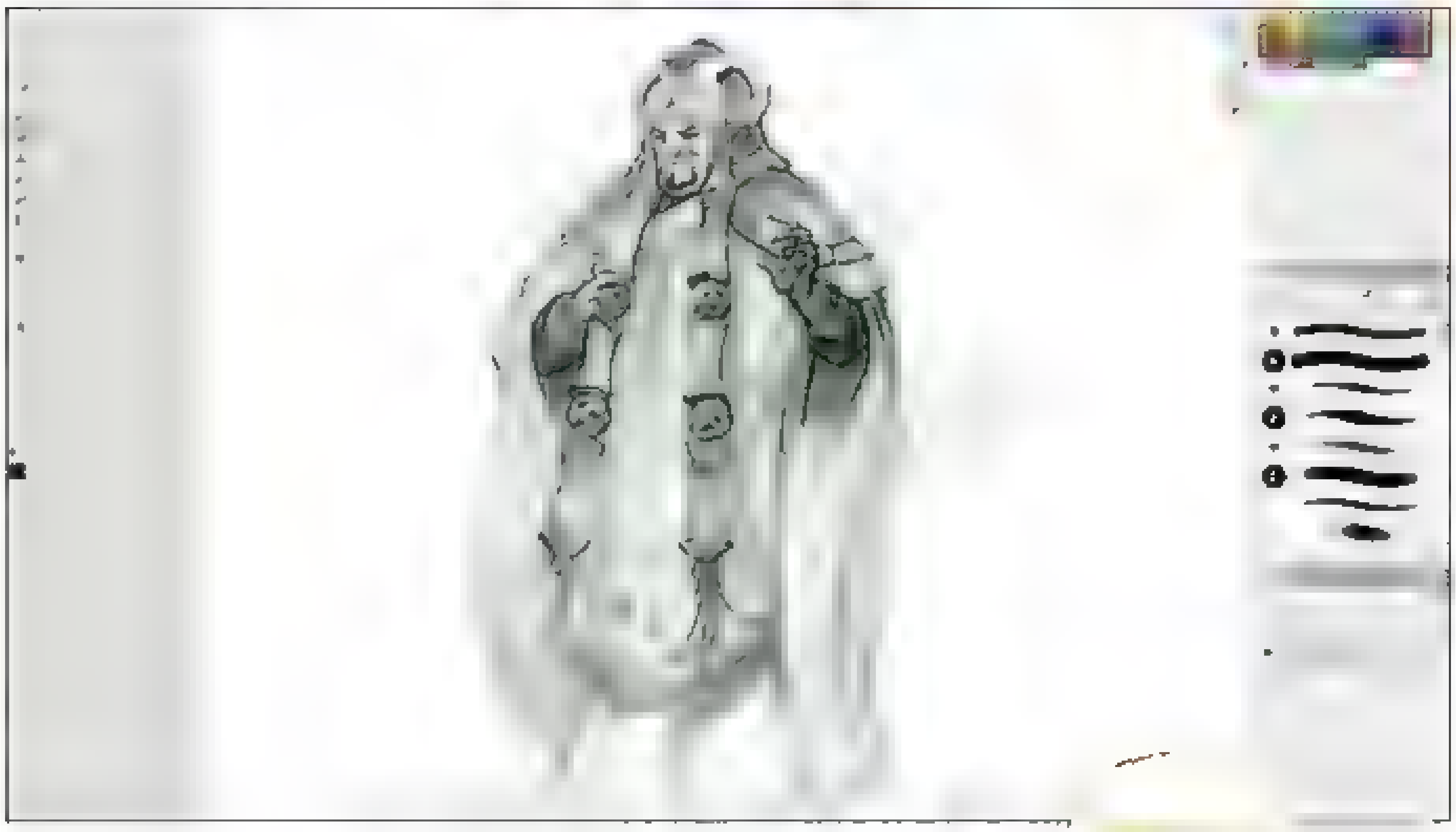


By tackling what's under the surface of your character, your viewer will better understand them.





Drawing techniques demonstrated on paper are easily transferable to the digital canvas



CREATURE AND C

Creature and Character Design

PEOPLE PERSON For veteran concept artist Sang Jun Lee, it's not just what's on the outside but on the inside that counts

Publisher **Price** **Format** **Web**

There's more to drawing a character than showing where they're from and what they do. It's more than the physical aspects of a person: it should evoke the qualities that lie beneath the character's skin as well.

Depicting a character or creature's inner self is as much a part of Sang Jun Lee's job as defining their milieu, and it's a principle that plays a big role in his video. There isn't too much said about where to take inspiration for your concept: this is more about establishing a routine that enables you to develop your idea from a three-second scribble to a polished drawing that reflects when and where the character exists, and what they think and feel.

Across three designs that feature creatures, characters and costume, Sang Jun first gets his ideas down and riffs his theme until he has something he likes. At this stage, the quality of the drawing itself barely matters. "You just need to see the idea," Sang Jun remarks at one point. He then creates successively more complete sketches, building each level of finish by drawing over the previous level. Although he uses pencil and tracing paper (with just a smidge of Photoshop to finish), the principles are readily applicable to digital art throughout.

It's in developing the sketch that this session's greatest value lies. You'll see how each layer requires a more careful line placement, as Sang Jun considers the effect of his strokes in establishing a rhythm within his line art. Moreover, you'll appreciate how lines and gestures help to define the character.

Sang Jun isn't always the most flowing of narrators, but offers some insights so delightful they'll make even seasoned artists look at familiar methods with fresh eyes. A clear silhouette for your character, for example, is like "When you recognise your friend from far away."

RATING ✎✎✎✎

DETAILS

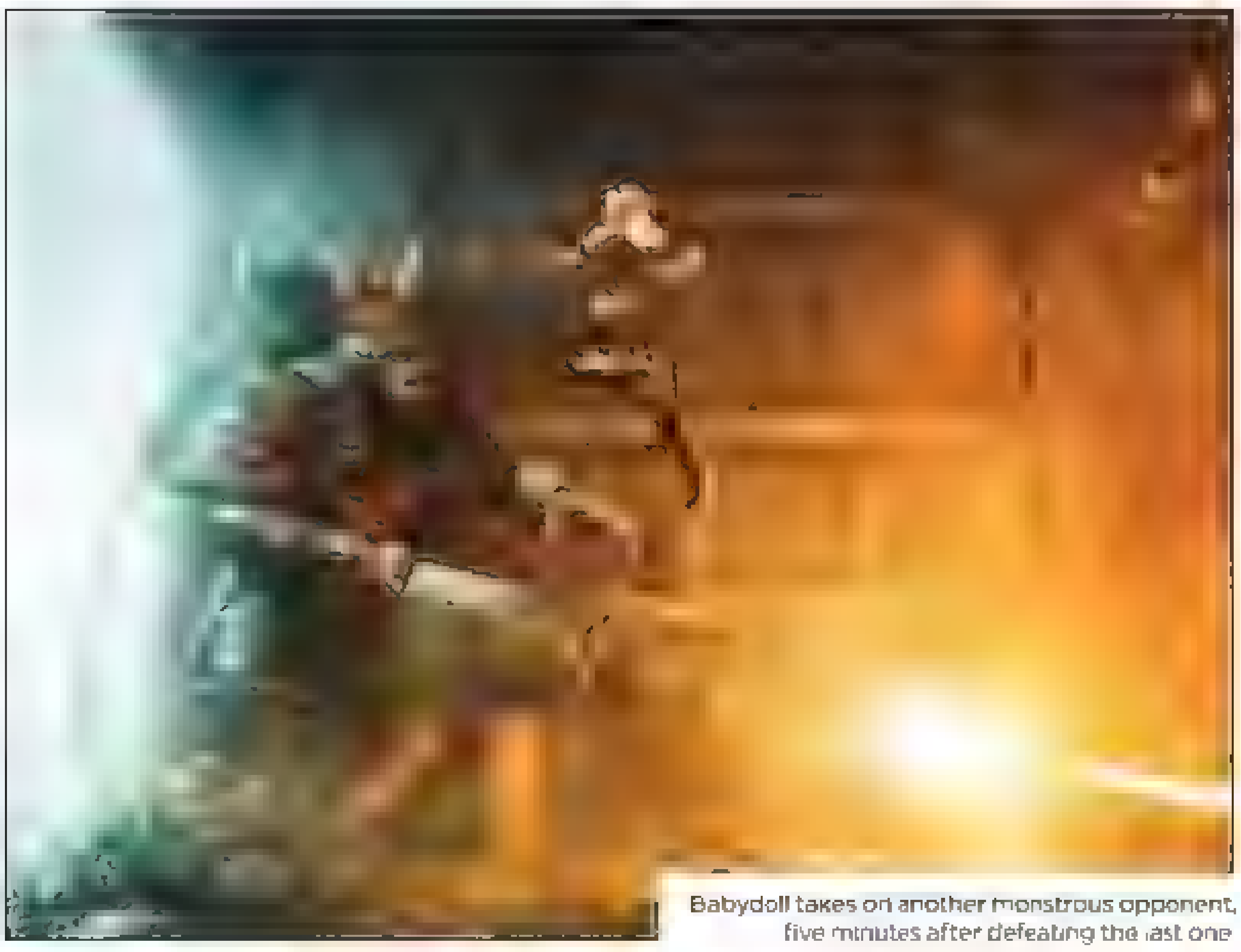
Chapters

Length

SANG JUN LEE

Sang Jun received his BFA in Illustration at the Academy of Art University in California. After graduating, he specialised in character, costume and creature design for feature film, commercial and game studios. His clients include Industrial Light & Magic, Lucasfilm, Blue Sky Studios, Sony Computer Entertainment and Electronic Arts. His film credits include Pirates of the Caribbean, Star Wars: Episode III, Men in Black II, Hulk, War of the Worlds, Horton Hears a Who and Rio.

sangjunart.com



Babydoll takes on another monstrous opponent, five minutes after defeating the last one

Sucker Punch

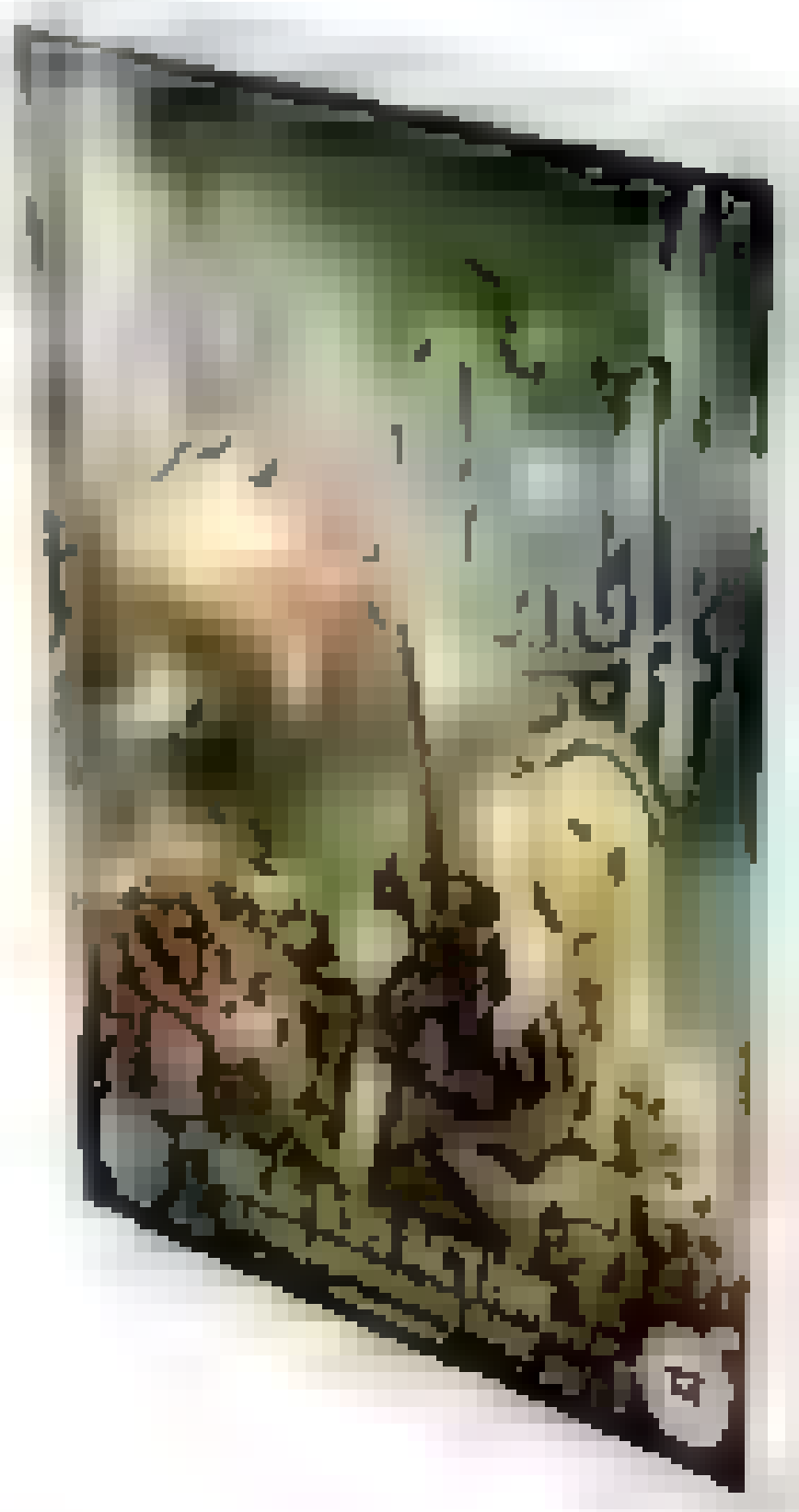
OUT FOR THE COUNT While bursting with imaginative visuals, this film's positively light on story and emotion

Distributor [illegible] **Cert** 15 **Price** [illegible] **Available** [illegible]

Clockwork Nazi zombies, dragons, orcs, freedom-fighting robots, giant gun-toting samurai, knights, rabbit-shaped mechs, the Hindenburg disaster and a burlesque dance number based on Roxy Music's Love is the Drug. All in one movie. Often all in the same scene. How can Sucker Punch possibly fail?

Babydoll (Emily Browning) has been incarcerated in a psychiatric hospital and is set for an illegal lobotomy organised by her evil stepfather. Our heroine has a week to escape, and she's doing it through a series of sexy dances (naturally!). Each dance becomes a fantasy Babydoll escapes into as her cohorts – Sweet Pea (Abbie Cornish), Rocket (Jena Malone), Blondie (Vanessa Hudgens) and Amber (Jamie Chung) – use the distraction to steal items they need to escape the asylum. It's Wizard of Oz meets Moulin Rouge as the gang fight imagined monsters in their underwear, and though the lines between fantasy and reality blur, the lean episodic structure keeps the action coherent.

Each foray into Babydoll's fantasies comes with a musical footnote sung by the cast that ushers in the next visual brain-dump. Like a schizoid Mr Benn each encounter mashes together disparate fantasy clichés and to this end, the concepts created by the film's art team, including Joel Chang, are superb – the steam-powered Nazi zombies are particular highlights. It's a shame then, that with so much creativity up on the screen the DVD and Blu-ray release features no concept art or even featurettes into designing the movie's excellent visual effects.



Worse still, the effort to make Sucker Punch a cut and paste visual delight comes at the expense of character development. Babydoll and her gang are asked to do little more than look sexy and cool in corsets and knee socks. Any pretence at female empowerment is sidelined for Snyder's wish list of fantasy fetishes and his happy hooker fairy tale – the final scenes leave a sour taste. Sucker Punch's moral compass is as muddled as the many fantasy tropes that gather on screen to do battle. It's a shame there weren't any decent extras to point us in the right direction.

RATING 👍½

Also look at…

A medieval stoner's comedy sans jokes, and Close Encounters of the Geek kind

Your Highness

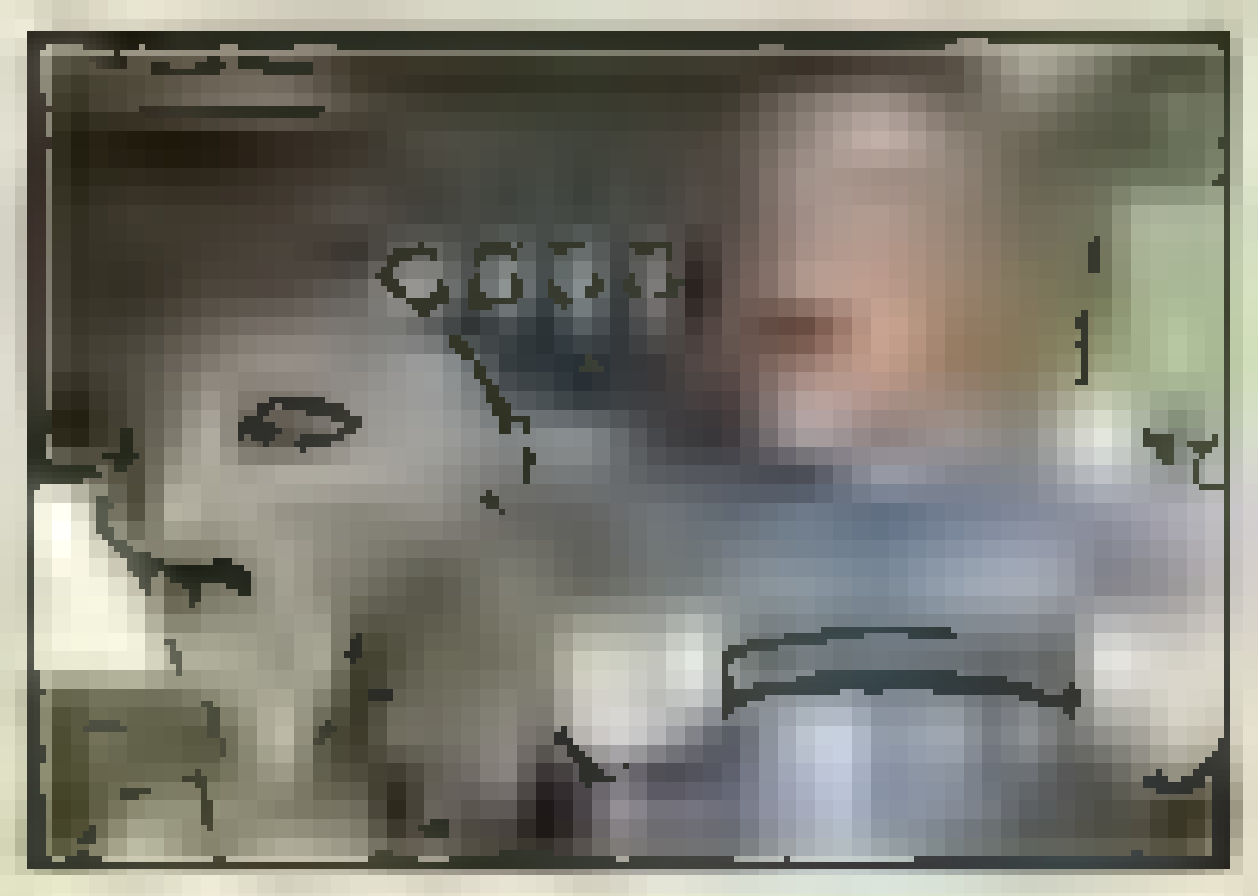
Distributor Entertainment One
Certificate 15
Price £20 (£25 Blu-ray)
Available Now
RATING 👍👍

With a punning title as lazy as a stoned medieval villain, and natural-born comic support Danny McBride taking the starring role, Your Highness's appeal was always going to be limited. McBride and director David Gordon Green have built on the weed-humour of Pineapple Express: a wizard gets whacked off, and there's a joke that centres on a character having no genitalia. What they've created is a fantasyland of Minotaur penis gags and F-bomb punchlines. Think Carry On doing D&D with a Saturday Night Live cast.

As brother knights, McBride and James Franco attempt to save their father's kingdom, the ye olde English torrent of sexual references becomes tedious. Luckily, the supreme effects studio Spectral Motion were on board to create some impressive creatures, so when the threadbare script all but disappears at least there's impressive eye candy to drag us over the finish line.

Paul

Distributor Universal Pictures
Certificate 15
Price £16 (£20 Blu-ray)
Available Now
RATING 👍👍👍



After visiting Comic-Con, Clive (Nick Frost) and Graeme (Simon Pegg) run into Paul (voiced by Seth Rogen), an escaped alien who needs a lift. Cue a chase across mid-west America pursued by the government and a creationist Christian.

Pegg and Frost's smart script is littered with throwaway in-jokes and knowing winks. Revelling in references to sci-fi's genre tropes (from sexualised alien women to the quality of Comic-Con merchandise), Paul works because its writers have a clear love of the genre.

The extras reinforce this, with a look at the movie's fictional sci-fi author Adam Shadowchild and the Evolution of the Paul's design among the features. But while on safe ground getting laughs from familiar sources, the film fails to take on some issues that are raised, such as one character's loss of faith. This ensures Paul remains light-hearted fun for those in on the joke.

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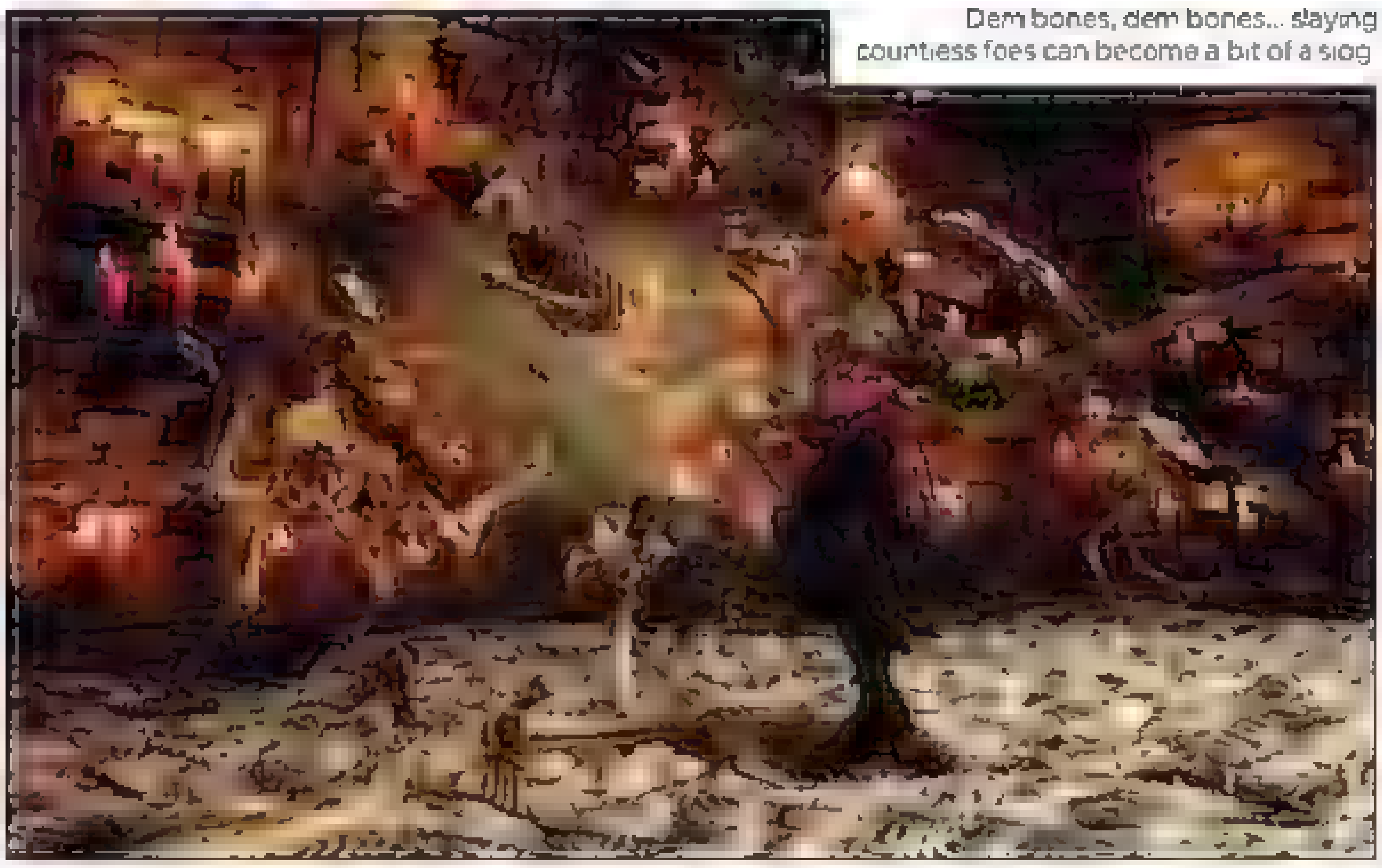


Dem bones, dem bones… slaying countless foes can become a bit of a slog

Hunted: The Demon's Forge

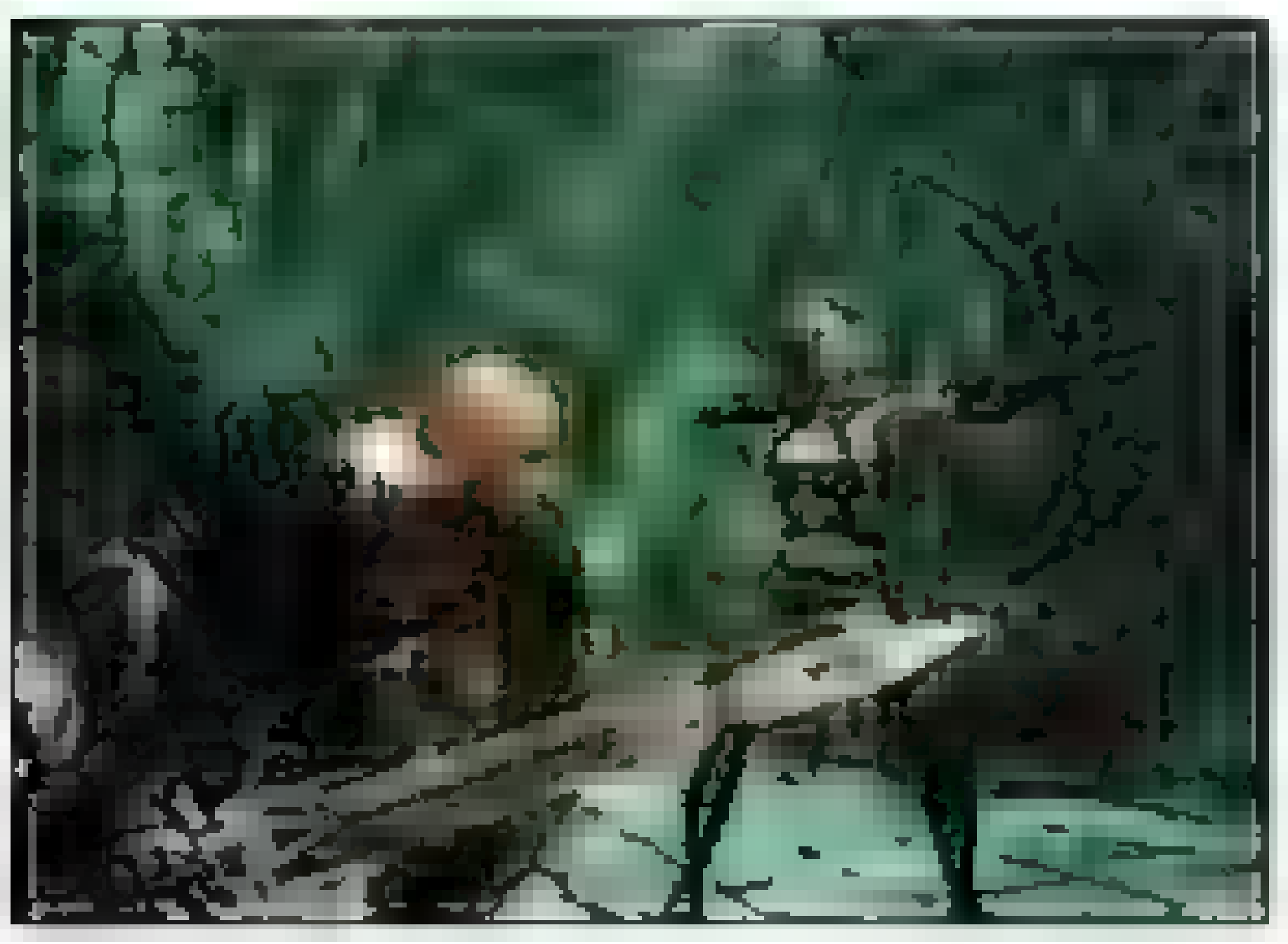
GOING UNDERGROUND Revisit the classic dungeon crawler genre, and this time you can bring a friend…

Format PC, PS3, Xbox 360 **Publisher** [illegible] **Price** £50 **Available** [illegible]

Hunted: The Demon's Forge is an interesting beast. Part Gears of War cover-based shooter and part dungeon crawler, it tells the tale of two mercenaries – the human Caddoc and the elf E'lara – exploring a deliciously dark world on a mission to save the kingdom while trying to turn in a profit.

When we spoke with inXile's CEO Brian Fargo in issue 71 he was clear he wanted Hunted to reclaim the dungeon crawler crown and in many ways the studio has succeeded. The environments have been deftly crafted and are uniquely grand in scale for this genre. The characters are neatly rendered and animated, and there's a good variety of special effects. Although many of the enemies feel like generic fodder, boss beasts such as Kurt Papstein's minotaur design feel fresh and dangerous.

However, while the visuals will keep you enthralled, Hunted does stumble on the problem that the genre as a whole finds hard to overcome: repetition. The story is a weak link in the chain and although the game features some RPG elements, such as enabling you to enhance a character's abilities over the course of the game, these don't go as far as you'd expect. One of the strangest design decisions is the inability to carry any extra loot throughout the game despite the fact that enemies will drop an abundance of weapons, shields and armour once you've disposed of them.



Co-op play adds a new dimension to the game

To overcome some of the flaws of the game and the genre, Hunted is best played with a friend in co-op. This is inXile's trump card for tackling dungeon apathy. Played solo it's an enjoyable adventure, but played with a friend it's a whole different experience that encourages you to bounce off each other's strengths. While it's definitely flawed, Hunted: The Demon's Forge is still worthy of a pickup.

RATING 👍👍👍

Also look at…

Snap, crackle and pop with an electric hero, and prepare to scare yourself silly

inFamous 2

Format PS3
Publisher Sony
Price £50
Available Now
RATING 👍👍👍

The follow-up to the 2009 summer sleeper hit sees electrically gifted superhero Cole McGrath on the run from The Beast, an unstoppable monstrosity that decimates everything in its path. It's set in New Marais, a New Orleans-inspired city littered with good and bad guys, murky swamps and dilapidated manor houses.

Much like the first game, the story is told predominantly through the use of unique comic book panels and despite a few minor meandering hiccups along the way works well. The comic story telling vibrates through the game's look: it's Assassin's Creed funnelled through Steve Ditko and Dave Gibbons.

While enjoyable, inFamous 2 suffers from being too derivative, whether it's borrowing characters from Watchmen or gameplay ideas from Crackdown. The further you play the more repetitive things get. It's frothy throwaway fun.

F.E.A.R. 3

Format PC, PS3, Xbox 360
Publisher Warner
Price £50
Available Now
RATING 👍👍👍👍

Evil Alma is back and this time she's got a little help from two masters of horror: Steve '30 Days of Night' Niles and John 'Halloween' Carpenter, who between them have worked wonders on the game's script. The result is a taut terrifying first-person shooter with a co-op twist, where you take on the role of Point Man, who appeared in the first game, and his brother Paxton Fettel. Both are sons of the game's malevolent undead psycho Alma.

While both writers' fingerprints are obvious throughout the game's storyline and scares, it's Mitch Cotie's superb environments and twisted creature designs that catch the eye. Every level is packed with spooky details, such as the cultists' ravings scrawled in blood across the walls. From writing to art, this is not your usual shooter, as typified by the multiplayer modes. Add in a free comic and you've got one of the best paranormal shooters in a long time.

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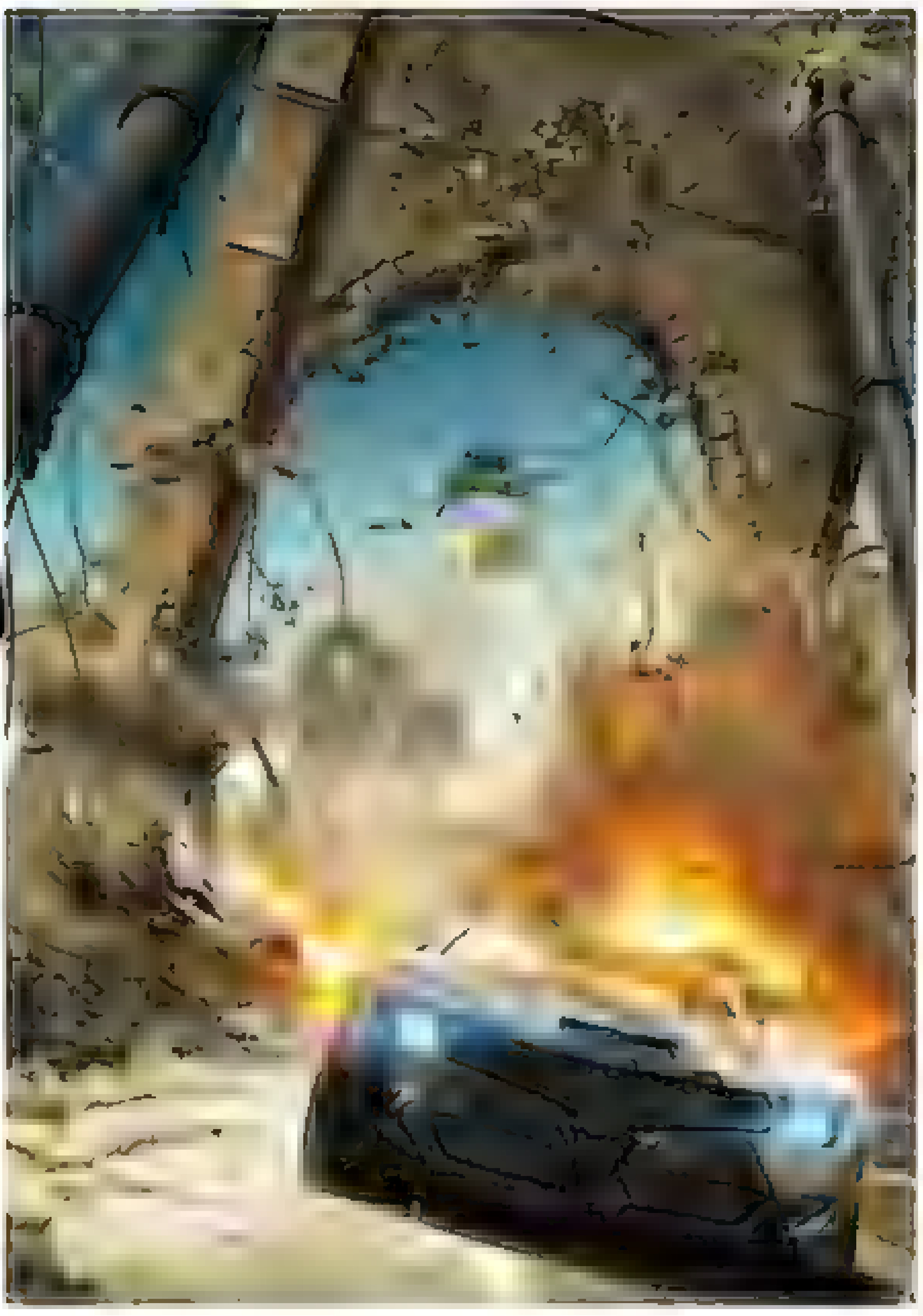


RealtimeUK recently created promotional stills for Disney Interactive's racing game Split Second

RealtimeUK

RENDER MAGIC This growing studio has a reputation for creating cinematic cut scenes for video games

Since this year's E3, there has been a "huge resurgence in interest in high-end CG trailers," says RealtimeUK's CG director Ian Jones. "As a result, we're being approached by more and more developers and publishers enquiring about future projects."

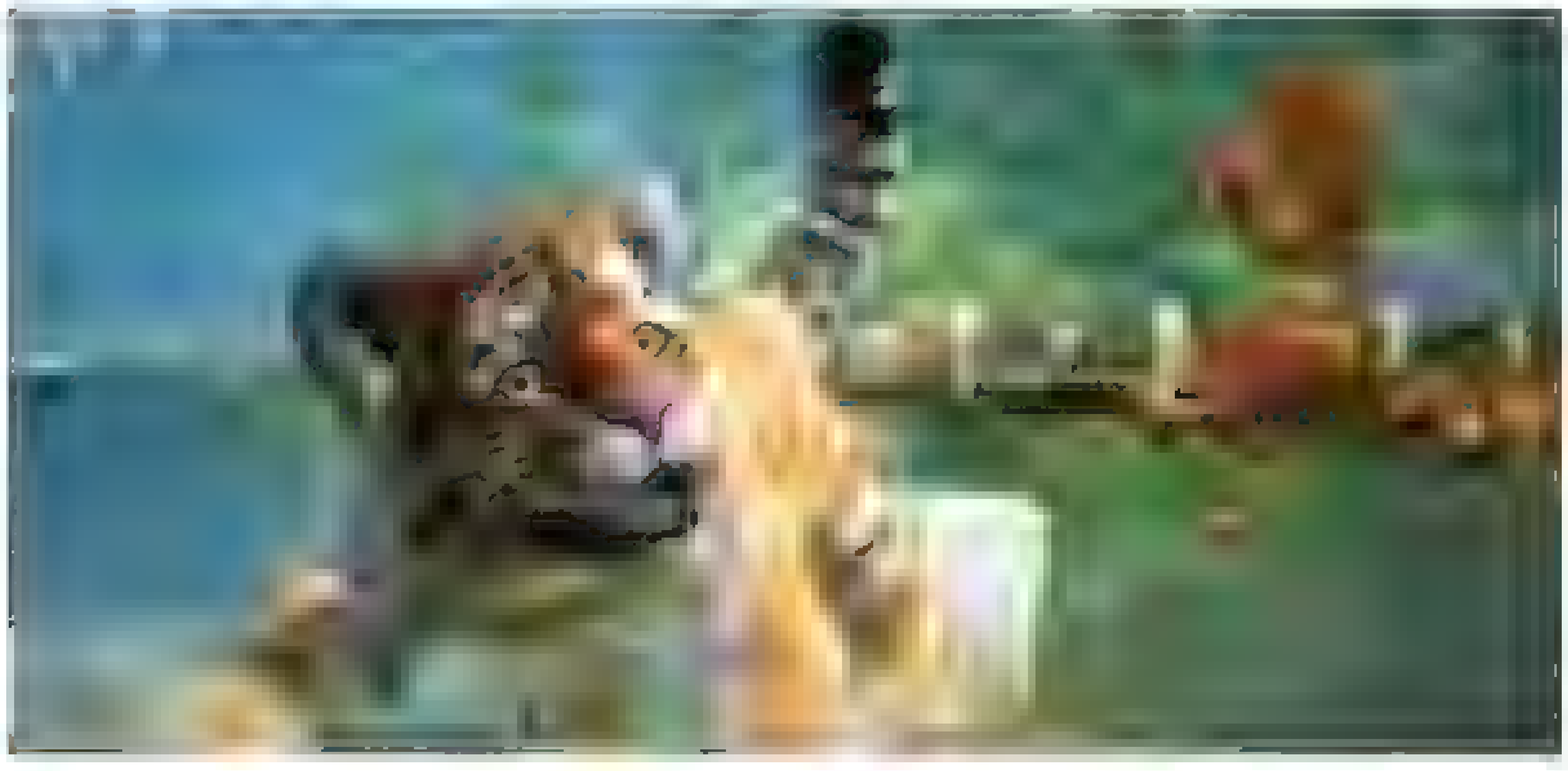
That sounds like pretty promising news for RealtimeUK, a northern company that specialises in quality CG animation and works with games companies around the world. It has recently contributed to Stormbirds for THQ, Split Second by Disney Interactive Studios and Sega's Total War: Shogun 2.

Working on the upcoming Transformers online game by Jagex enabled Ian to unlock his own childhood imagination. "I had all the toys," he enthuses, "and I grew up watching Transformers, so it was a privilege to be able to work on one of my favourites."

Ian works alongside creative director Chris Fenna. Whereas Ian focuses on the technical side of CG animation and rendering, and uses his cinematic flare, Chris oversees concept work, pre-production and animation direction. In addition to commissioning RealtimeUK to create cut scene animations, games companies also employ the studio to work on concept art for projects.

"We do lots of concept art as promotional imagery without being involved in the actual game," points out Chris. "Operation Flashpoint: Red River is an example of our recent imagery work. We produced 16 press images without getting involved in the marketing trailer."

By working at several different stages in the production of computer games, the studio has broadened its collective skills and understanding of the industry. In some cases RealtimeUK will develop storyboards and animatics that game programmers can refer to when designing the



RealtimeUK produced rendered cut scenes for Kinectimals, Microsoft's Kinect for Xbox game that was all about keeping virtual pets - including a Bengal tiger

PROJECTS Total War: Shogun 2, Split Second, Stormbirds, Kinematicals

ARTIST INTERVIEW

STU BAYLEY

Concept artist Stu loves the variety he gets at RealtimeUK

What key skills do artists working at RealtimeUK need?
You need to be driven in terms of personal progression, in order to help drive the company forward. RealtimeUK is made up of a tightly knit team, and the ability to work closely with others and share and develop ideas is key.

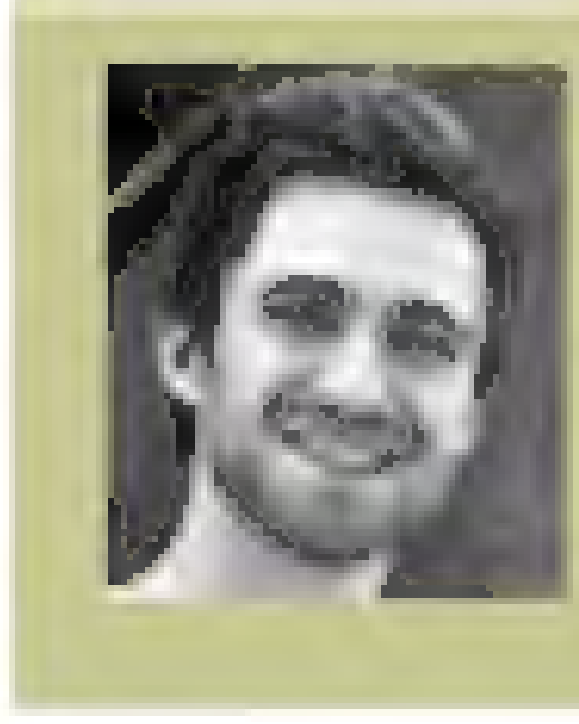
And what's challenging about the job there?
There are tight deadlines to meet while keeping a consistent level of quality in your work. But to be honest that's also one of the reasons I like concept art so much. The pressure to come up with creative solutions and great visuals at speed keeps the job very interesting.

What kind of projects do you get to work on?
There's lots of variety in my work – one week I could be working on zombie concepts and the next I'm producing highly stylised environment designs.

How much creative freedom do you get as an artist?
This can vary from client to client. Some may have a seed of an idea and will look to us to develop this and present our creative solution, whereas others will have a real fixed brief and know exactly what they want. In either case, we always look to not match but exceed the expectations of the client.

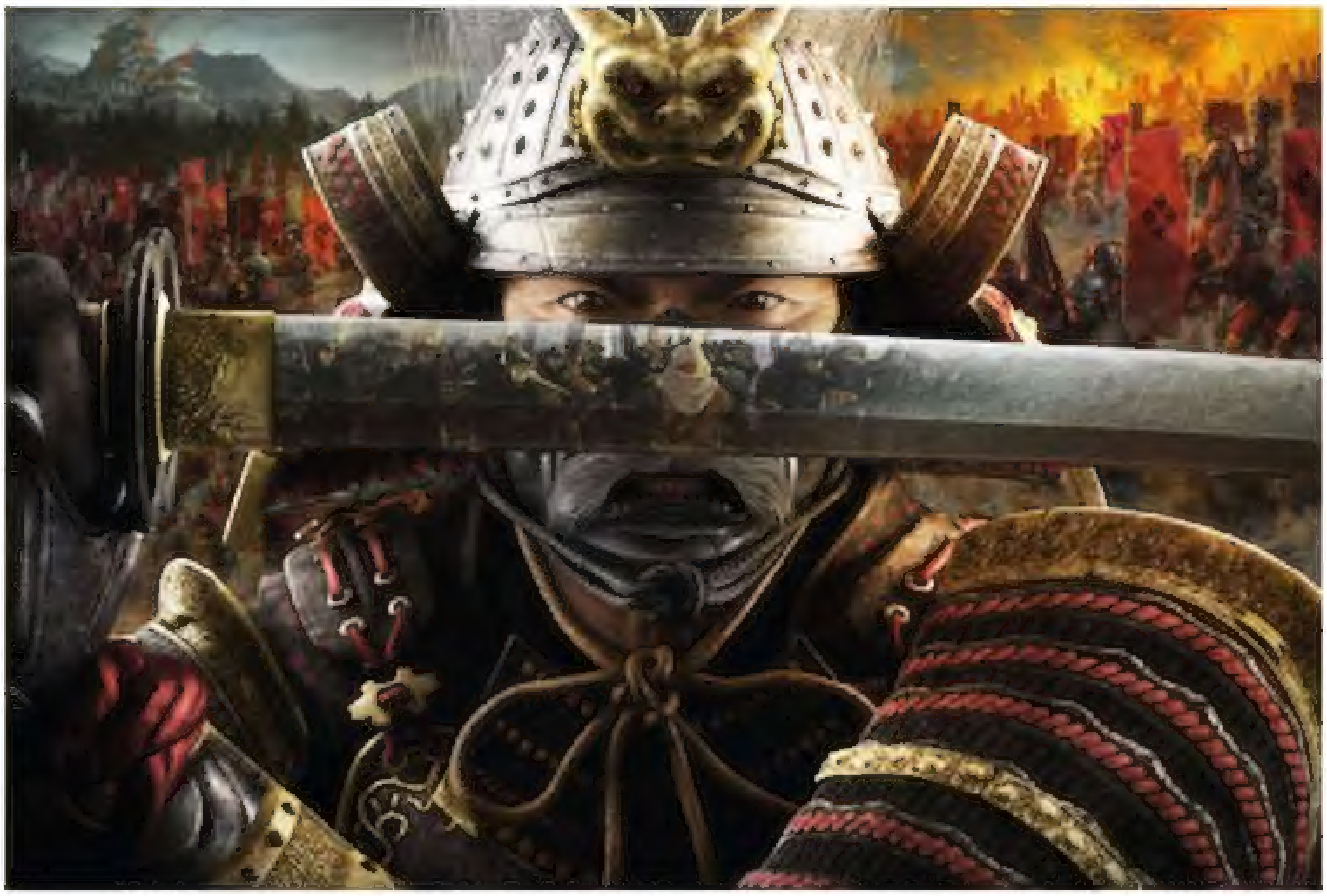
Would you say RealtimeUK has its own style?
Yes – as a team we strive for high-end cutting edge visuals while keeping a quirky creative feel. It's very important to Realtime that visual and creative elements are given equal importance.

What's your favourite kind of project to work on?
Most subjects have something credible you can take from them artistically – that's why I love being a concept artist. But to be totally honest, it's robots every time!



Stu counts John Singer Sargent, Ashley Wood, Caspar David Friedrich, Craig Mullins and Phil Hale as influences.

shivaree-art.blogspot.com



A still from an awesome trailer that RealtimeUK created for Sega's upcoming release Total War: Shogun 2.

gameplay. This happened when Chris worked on the 007 title Blood Stone for Bizarre Creations.

RealtimeUK was founded in 1996 and today is based in a purpose-built studio on a farm in the Lancashire countryside near Preston. The stone building, with hardwood floors and exposed rafters, seems like an ideal setting for the 23-strong art team, which currently includes 13 freelance animators who are contributing to an ongoing project.

Chris is in charge of hiring new artists. "I think for a portfolio to really stand out to me, I'd like to see evidence of individual creativity," he explains. "For concept artists, strong drawing, painting and design skills are obviously essential. For animators, a strong character-driven reel without too much mo-cap is favourable."

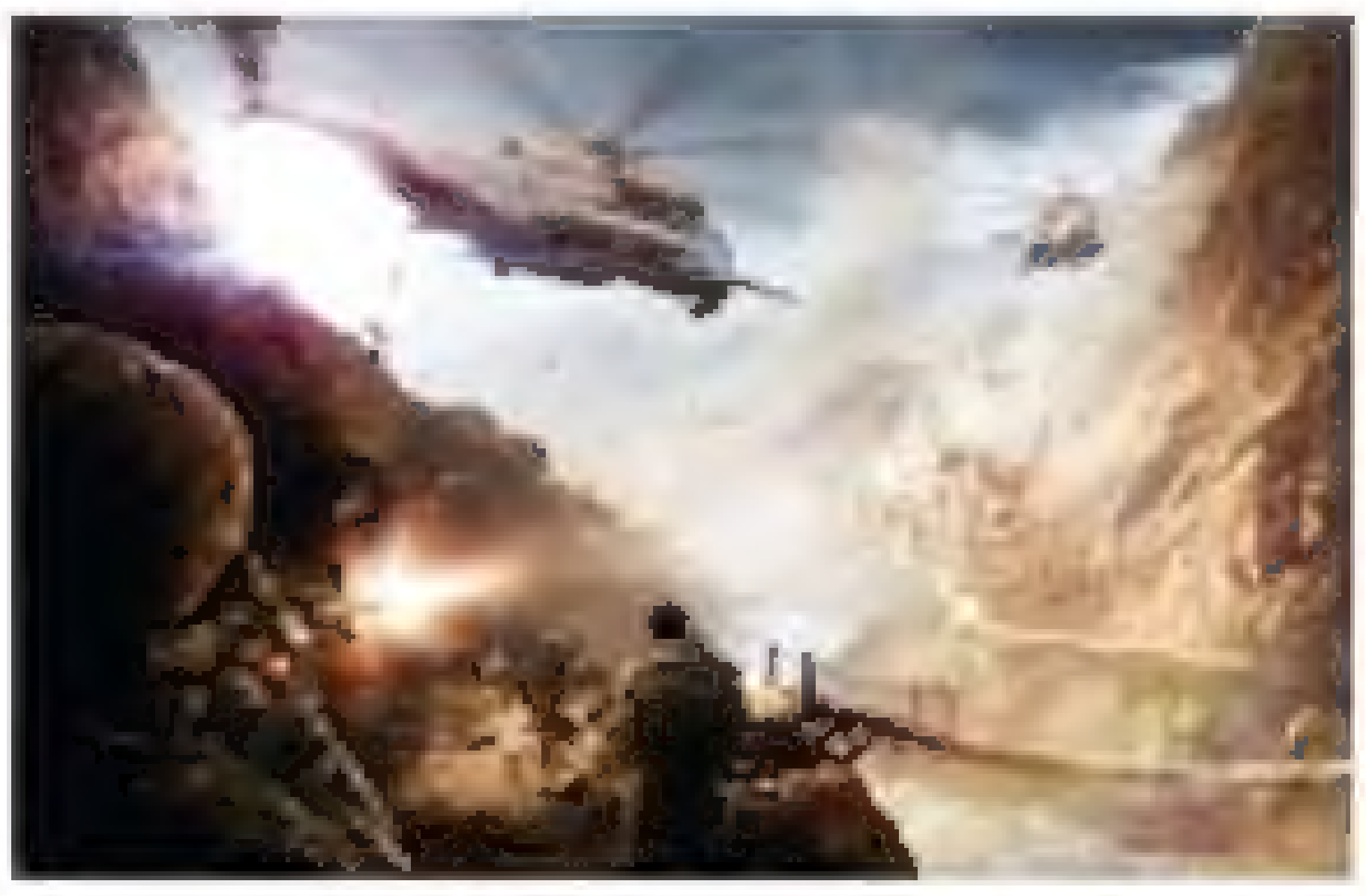
Many commercial CG houses avoid being typecast for working in a particular style. However, RealtimeUK can't help but acknowledge that the sci-fi and fantasy content it's often called on to create has contributed to the concept art look and feel you can detect in its work.

Because its existing content helps previsualise so many projects, this is no bad thing, according to Ian.

"A lot of our pre-vis is centred around fantastic concept art. Where possible, we try to inject as much of this style into our final movies using dramatic 2D matte paintings and stylised texture art," he says.

And this spills over into the production side as well. He continues: "We also use concept art to drive the visual style of our lighting and rendering. Stylised artwork is far more acceptable to the eye, rather than extreme photo-realistic imagery." ●

> ## “We do lots of concept art as promotional imagery, without being involved in the actual game”



Codemasters required 16 stunning artworks to promote Operation Flashpoint: Red River, and called on RealtimeUK.

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Charles talks about value pattern shapes, which enable you to create links between separate shapes, unifying those shapes, and in turn the whole of the image.

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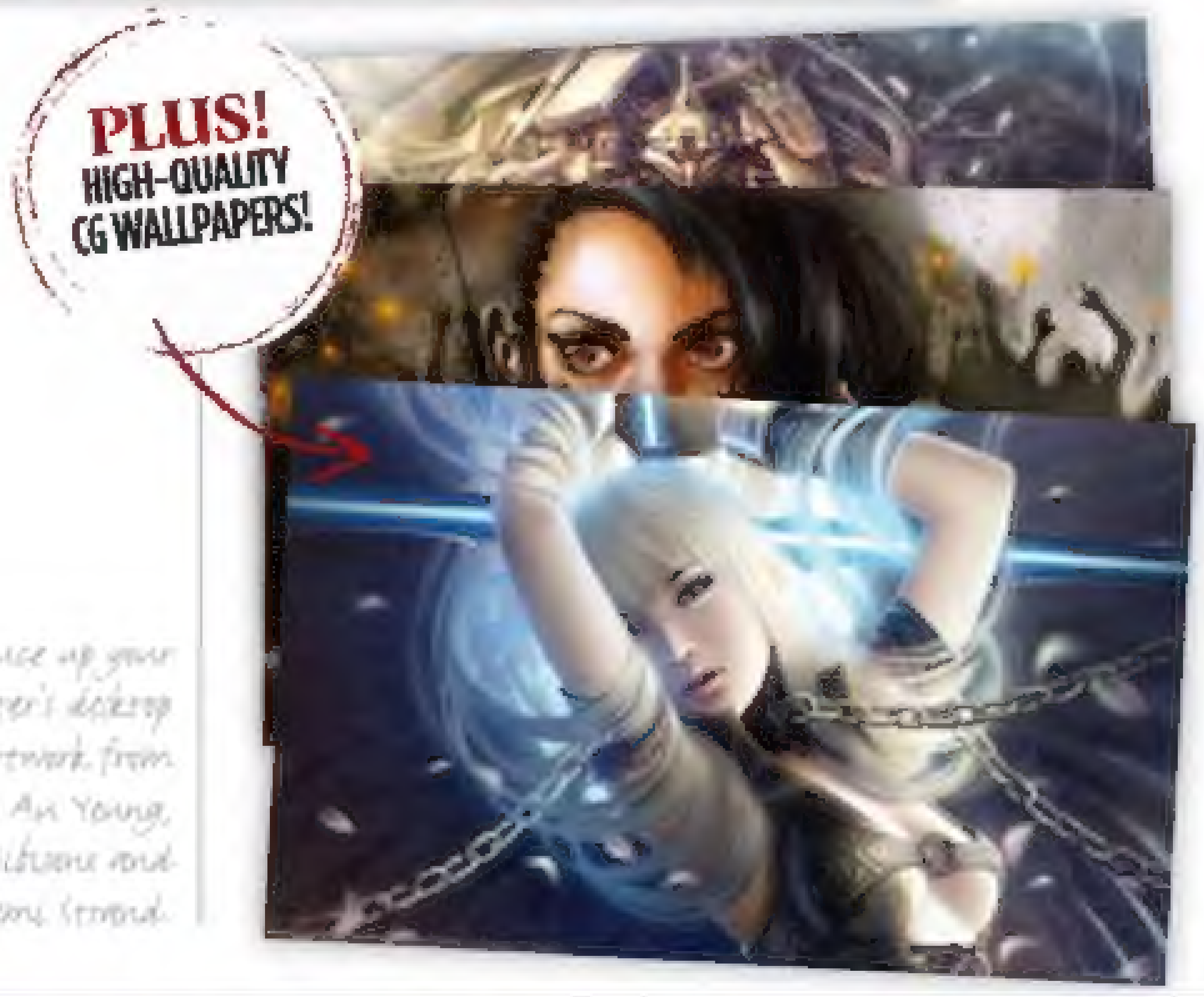

Spruce up your computer's desktop with artwork from Chun Hay An Young, Marie Williams and Remi Strand.

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Issue 73 September 2011

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Discover how Jorge Jacinto injects his ancient woodland with a strong sense of scale and wonder

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70 Colour a radiant beauty of the sea
• WIP files • Brushes • Final image • Video

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76 Enhance the face of a character
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82 Paint a lush fantasy forest
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88 Age your fantasy art
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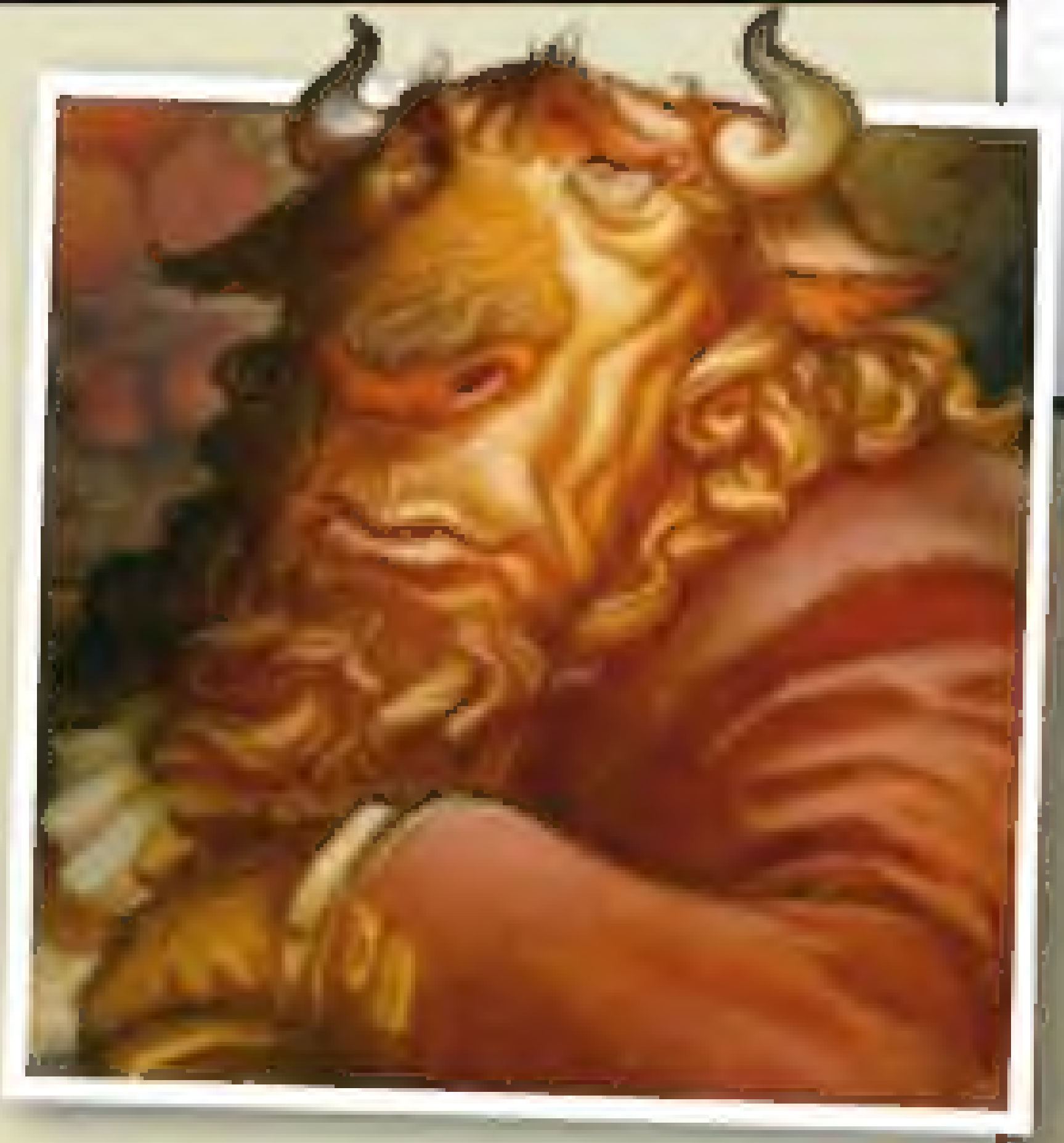
96 Painter 12's Mirror mode
• WIP files • Painter workspace
• References • Final image • Video

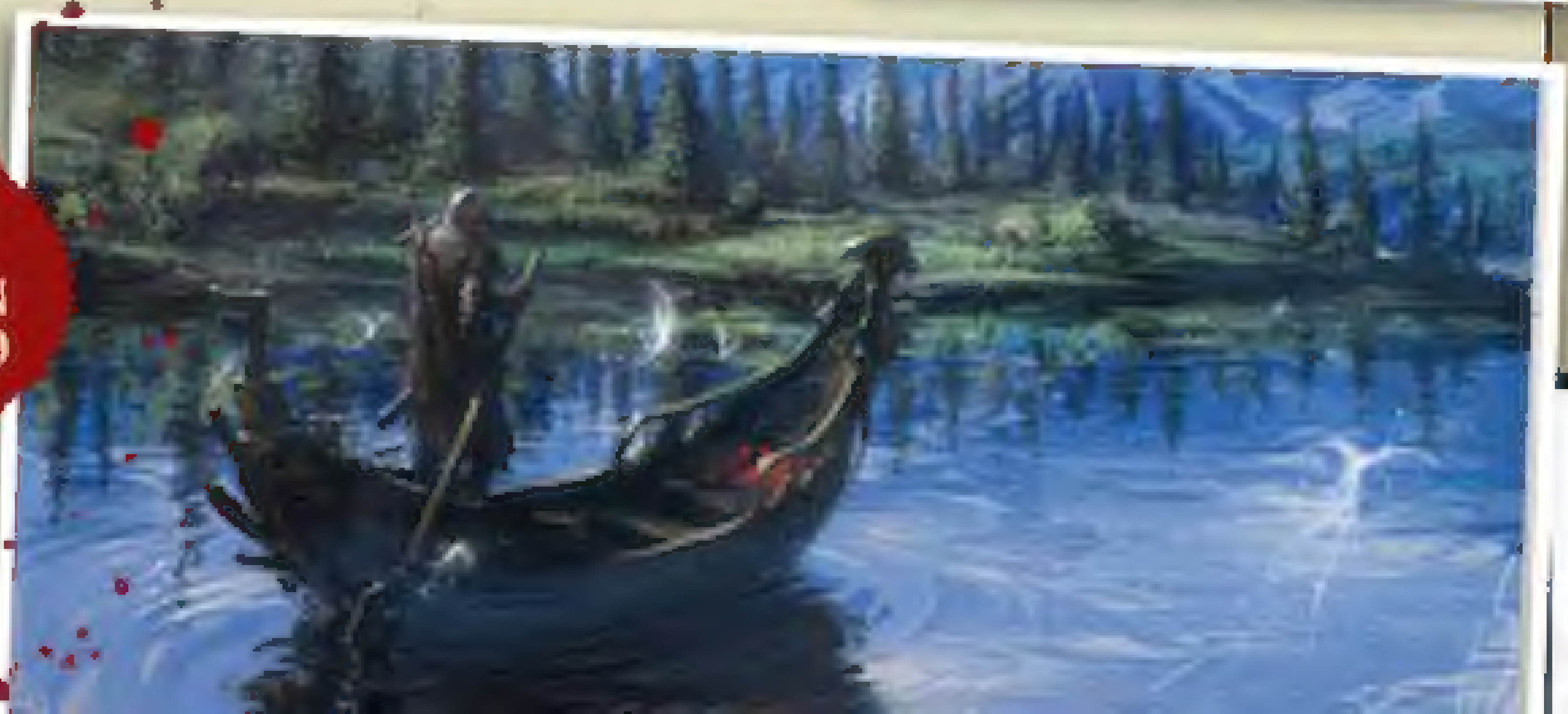
TOP ART ADVICE!

In this month's fantasy special...

Nice feel Justin Gerard on retaining textures from the underpainting stage.

Time zone Learn how to turn morning into evening with Remko Troost.





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